

LIFE THOUGHTS

BY THE

REV. W. MORLEY PUNSHON, M.

TWELFTH THOUSAND.

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"Strength and Peace."

SEE the labourer, whom the morning calls from slumber, hastening to the cheerful fields, where the dew has freshly glittered and the lark has newly sung. What needs he for the work which waits his ready hand? Surely strength to do it—the flexile muscle, the strong, obedient sinew. See him again at the eventide, when the sun is liberal to the western clouds, and throws them largess of glory. See how, to greet his homeward steps, little feet are pattering from under the jasmine-d thatch, and at the garden gate there is great mystery and clapping of hands; while from the inner room there flashes out upon the twilight a loving, wifely smile. What is his fitting blessing just then?—what the en-

dowment which seems properly to belong to that season? Surely peace. Nothing to corrode, distract, alarm; a tranquil spirit, around which slumber draws, as the cool, quiet shadows draw around the outside world.

"He is not dead, but sleepeth."

An awful change passes upon one we love. He looks pale and motionless. We see not the glances of his eye, we hear not the music of his voice; and, as he lies stretched and breathless upon the couch of his slumbers, it is very difficult to believe that he is not dead. But "he is *not* dead, but sleepeth." Mourner, canst thou credit it? Orphan, "believest thou this?" Bereaved one, is there no chord in thy stricken heart which trembles responsive to the tone? "He is not dead, but sleepeth." His life is with him yet, as warm, as young, as energetic as in days gone by, only it is *hidden*. What an encouraging thought! Let it still your throbbing hearts. Let it hush the tempest within you to a calm. We mourn you not, ye departed ones, who have died in the faith, for ye have entered into life.

"It doth not yet appear what we shall be."

What surprising discoveries will flash upon us when we enter the other world! Oh, brethren, when the change takes place upon us—when we are launched into the boundless—when we take large surveys of the ways and works of God—when His unveiled glory shall blaze upon our raptured vision—how shall we be lost in wonder! How shall we be ready even to doubt our own identity, and express our astonishment in strains somewhat similar to these:—"Is this I, so lately grovelling and earthly? Oh, how changed! Is this the soul that was so racked with anxiety, and dimmed with prejudice, and stained with sin—the soul which was gulfed beneath such waves of woe—the soul whose every passion was its tempter, which was harassed by an all-absorbing fear of never reaching heaven. Now, how ennobling! Not a thought of evil molests it, not an enemy causes it to fear. It has reached the haven. It has crossed the Jordan; and those waters, which on the brink looked so angry and boisterous, now, 'ripple peacefully on the eternal shore.'"

The Apostle Peter.

In the frank outspokenness of Peter we have very frequently occasion to rejoice. There is a fulness of rich and interesting truth in many of his statements upon which we cannot fail profitably to dwell. They are miniature gospels—gems of finest lustre, and, like the diamond, made to cut as well as shine.

The Greatness of Trifles.

How solemn is the life that now is ! There is greatness even in its trifles ; for they are agencies, all of them, for good or evil. The cairn is heaped high by each one flinging a pebble ; and the living well is worn by the diligent flow of the brook ; and the shoal that has wrecked a navy is only the work of a colony of worms. And in the moral world surely there can be no trifles at all. Nourish the unrecorded thought of ill, and it shall ripen into the full deed by and by. Hug the sin to the bosom, and cry, “Is it not a little one ?” and the one demon will go out only to bring a brotherhood of seven home. The most

blood-stained man of crime once prattled at a mother's knee. Trifles! They have fixed a destiny, and have sealed a doom many a time.

"Our sufficiency is of God."

Yes, brethren, it is a blessed verity—one of the most encouraging, and one of the most comprehensive truths in the Bible. The all-sufficiency of God may be styled the essence of all Christian experience; it is the moral which the Scriptures continually inculcate; it stands in the heraldry of heaven as the motto on the believer's arms. The all-sufficiency of God gives strength to patience, solidity to hope, constancy to endurance, nerve and vitality to effort. The weakest believer, with this sacred treasure, is enabled to go steadily forward.

The Ministerial Call.

It is God, not man, that makes—not finds—able ministers of the New Testament. The tones of His voice are heard saying, "Son,

go work to-day in my vineyard." And it is a remarkable fact, and one which we should never forget, that this voice is never heard in a heart where there is no faith ; consequently, the prime qualification for the Christian ministry is a heart which has been melted by Christ's love. Without this all else is unavailing ; the attainment of the most profound and extensive knowledge, the grasp of the loftiest and most searching intellect, the possessor of the most commanding eloquence, the treasures of the most imperial fancy,—all are useless, worse than useless, without the converting grace of God, just as the trappings which decorate the traitor only make his treason the fouler, and they stand forth as the weapons of more terrible danger, and as the portent of more terrific and appalling ruin.

"He upholdeth all things by the word of His power."

It is by this ever-breathing word constantly in exercise that the sun shines, that the moon walks in brightness, that the stars pursue their courses in the sky. The clouds are

marshalled by His divine decree, and when He uttereth His voice there is a multitude of waters in the heavens. Reason looks at this systematic and continuous regularity, and admires it, and refers it to the operation of second causes. Piety looks through the complications of the mechanism to the Hand that formed it. The universe is to her but as one vast transparency, through which she can gaze on God. Her pathway and communion are on the high places of creation. There, far above all secondary and subordinate agencies, she discovers the hidings of His power. The symmetry of nature is to her more beautiful because God has produced it. The deep harmonies of the systems come more tunefully upon her ear, because the hand of the Lord has awakened them.

“What though no real voice nor sound,
Amid the radiant orbs be found?
In faith’s quick ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a noble voice;
For ever singing as they shine,
He who sustains us is divine.”

Human Eloquence.

A mighty thing I know—a persuasive and powerful thing I know, and, under certain circumstances, it can accomplish great results. It can charm a Herod, it can make a Felix tremble, and it can almost persuade an Agrippa to become a Christian ; but it can do no more. I know that immense multitudes have been swayed sometimes by the power of a single tongue. The passions can be excited either to madness or sympathy, either to deeds of lawless aggression or deeds of high enterprise, but there is only a transient mastery obtained. We read of a harp in the classic fables of old, which, when the wind swept it, was said to discourse eloquent strains, but then, unhappily, the breeze and the music died away together. So it is with the triumph of the orator : the moment the voice of the speaker ceases the spell is broken, the dream is dissipated, reflection begins to remonstrate against excitement, and the whole affair is forgotten.

"The perfect law of liberty."

Here is a summary, compendious and beautiful, of the characteristics of God's pure Word. It is a *law*, not an opinion amenable to the caprice of the individual, to be obeyed or ignored at the bidding of an arbitrary will. It is a law, an authoritative obligation, issued by One who has a right to speak. It is a *perfect* law. Given originally in fragments, waxing constantly from the obscurer to the clearer revelation, it is presented now as the complete canon of Jehovah's will. Like its Author, it is full-orbed. It shines not with the gleam of the crescent, fast waning, but with the perpetual glow of perfect noon. It is a perfect law, then ; it can be followed by no supplement. Perfect ! then it can be superseded by no invention. Perfect ! then it can be set in clearer light by no blaspheming spiritualism. It is a perfect law of *liberty*. Some persons cannot understand the collocation of those words at all ; they cannot conceive of liberty as existing in the same realm as law. Their idea of freedom is the licence of ungoverned appetite, or the delirium into which anarchy drags itself in its

reaction from oppression ; something like the state of ancient Israel in the interval between the Judges and the anointed Kings, when every man did that which was right in his own eyes. But such licence is mere hidden thralldom. Was it not so at the time of the French reign of terror ? It has been well observed, that the wisest liberty is a self-imposed restraint. The lark enjoys as great a sense of freedom when it nestles in the tufted field as when it trills its song in the sky. Agrippa, the base slave in purple, sat upon the judgment-seat, but Paul, the prisoner in fetters, was the Lord's freeman notwithstanding. There is a perfect consistency in the terms of the apostle James.

The Accelerating Progress of Evil.

A denier of the original taint of sin once stood before two pictures which hung side by side upon a wall. The first was the portrait of a boy with open brow, and curls that look golden in the sunshine, and cheeks whose damask beauty shame the ripened fruit, wearing that happy smile which can be worn

but once in life—a smile whose rippling waves are poisoned by no weeds of suspicion, and break upon no strand of doubt, looking gaily up from the flowered earth into the azure heaven, without the slightest misgiving. From the canvas of the second picture there glared out a wolfish eye—the home of all subtlety and malice: and in the gloom of the dim-lighted cell you might perceive the matted hair, and garments stained with blood,—chains clank, or seem to clank, upon his fettered limbs. All tell of the desperate character of the man. On these two pictures, hanging side by side, the denier of original sin fixed his gaze, until the exclamation burst out at length in a tone of half-concealed triumph, “What! do you mean to say that these two beings were originally and radically the same? Do you mean, to tell me that any amount of evil teaching could ever develop that guileless child into that debased and godless man?” The artist volunteered the information that the portraits were taken from the life of the self-same individual at different stages of his history. You know the moral of the tale. There is an accelerating progress in an ungodly course, increasing

with the momentum of an avalanche when the first stages of its course have run. The descent into perdition is easy when the strivings of the passions are seconded by the dictates of the will. Sinner, I charge thee, beware lest thy sin become habit. What! do you say you have already resolved at some future time to repent, to reform? You are blind to your danger. In yon grim hulks there are multitudes of men to-day who have hearts like yours within them, although they have cased them from the truth as in a coat of triple steel. If you could get them to lay bare the sad secret of their history, you would be frightened to find it so much like your own. Good resolutions, early home teachings, deathless memories of a mother's prayers; but a strong temptation, weak restraints, godless associates, a first fall, from which, alas! the young man never, never rose, and then a casting off the mask of shame. Oh, take the truth to your hearts to-night, you who are unconverted. No man became a criminal, a hypocrite, a villain all at once; but from a state of innocence he has slidden down, until to-night we see him on the lowest rung of the

ladder, and to-morrow a dishonoured suicide.
Beware of the deceitfulness of sin !

Death.

Death to the Christian is but the time of greatest triumph, because the time of nearest home. Just as autumnal tints are richest in the woodland, and the decaying forest trees wear gayest colours,—as if, like so many Cæsars, they had gathered their imperial robes about them, so seemlily to die,—so the Christian has found often the strength most vigorous, and the peace the stillest and divinest, when the shadow gathered on the countenance sympathetic with the other shadow which had waited in the room. Be comforted, my brother, whom the thought of death hath often oppressed with a strange, heavy disquiet — be comforted. God will be glorified in thy death, if thou but aim to glorify Him in thy life. If the eventide come on with lengthening shadows, or without a twilight, as in eastern skies, there shall be light at eventide ; if the conflict be with torn

plume and broken sword, like the wounded chieftain,

“With dying hand, above the head
You’ll shake the fragment of the blade,
And shout your victory.”

God in History.

It is not enough, if we would study history aright, that we follow in the track of battles, that we listen to the wail of the vanquished and to the shout of the conquerors ; it is not enough that we excite ourselves into a sort of hero worship of the world’s foster gods, the stalwart and noble peerage of mankind ; it is not enough that we trace upon the page of history the subtle and intricate developments of human character ; to study history aright we must find God in it, we must always recognise the ever-present and the ever-acting Divinity, working all things according to the counsel of His own will.

Unity.

By unity we do not mean uniformity. There is none; there can be none in the free universe of God. You have it not in nature. You may go out into the waving woodland, when death is on the trees, and you may prune their riotous growth, and mould, and shape, and cut them into something like a decent, a decorous uniformity; but the returning spring, when it comes, will laugh at your aimless labour. Wherever there is life there will be found variety of engaging forms which attract and fascinate the eye. We do not mean uniformity, therefore,—the harmony of voices, or the adjustment of actions,—the drowsy repetition of one belief, or the harmonious intonation of one liturgy; but we mean “the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

“Many are the sorrows of the righteous.”

One reads that passage so far and stops, and turns away, and says, Oh, what a melancholy system! how clothed in sackcloth!

how its hymns are all wailing and doleful psalms ! how cypress is there instead of the laurel or the bay ! how everything is gloomy ! You cannot expect us to forego the pleasures and enjoyments of the world for such a doleful subject as that—"Many are the sorrows of the righteous"—their own book says so. "*But the Lord delivereth them out of them all.*" That is the other part, and the world leaves that out, cuts the passage, mutilates it in order to suit its own purpose, and in order to furnish it with excuses for neglecting the gospel claims.

The Widow of Nain.

There is a young man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she a widow. Death had been an early visitant at her dwelling ; but the first shock had had some element of mercy in it, for the son was living still, and in him the husband was reproduced, and while the fair promise of his glorious youth was there, the oil was not all dried up in the poor widow's cruse. But the son has died now. The last refuge and shelter of the deso-

late heart is torn away, as with the pomp and wailing of the funeral they bore the dead upon his bier. And now in the gate of the city, where the crowd are gathered, and the noise and discord is greatest, there comes suddenly a silence, and the sounds of woe are hushed. What does it mean? The Son of God is passing by, and He came and touched the bier. The widow, who followed in the train, wept, not noisily; but they who looked upon her saw that her sorrow was of that crushing kind that was far too deep for tears. And the Lord pitied her, and said, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother." Oh that calm and solemn brow, lighted up with a joyous benignity, chased away the shadows of the grave. Well might the discord be changed into music such as no orchestra could compass.

The Adaptation of Scripture.

How marvellous is the adaptation of Scripture for the race for whom it was revealed!

In its pages every conceivable condition of human experience is reflected as in a mirror. In its words every struggle of the heart can find appropriate and forceful expression. It is absolutely inexhaustible in its resources for the conveyance of the deepest feelings of the soul. It puts music into the speech of the tuneless one, and rounds the periods of the unlettered into an eloquence which no orator can rival. It has martial odes to brace the warrior's courage, and gainful proverbs to teach the merchant wisdom. All mental moods can represent themselves in its amplitude of words. It can translate the doubt of the perplexed, it can articulate the cry of the contrite, and it fills the tongue of the joyous with carols of thankful gladness. Happy we, my friends, who, in all the varieties of our religious life, have this copious manual divinely provided to our hand.

Christ the Theme of Scripture.

God anointed holy men of old, and made them prescient of the future, and appointed certain types, and ceremonies, and ordinances

to be observed in the ritual of the chosen people, the children of Israel. Why was all this? Were prophets ushered into the presence-chamber, and did the flood of light burst upon their previously-clouded vision? It was that they might foretell the glories of Christ. Were there types and ceremonies in the grand Levitical economy? Those types, every one of them, foreshadowed Christ. To Him give all the prophets witness. He was the Shiloh that blessed the expiring Jacob. He was the burden of the songs of the royal bard of Israel. He was "The Wonderful, The Counsellor," of whom Isaiah speaks. He was "The Lord our Righteousness," spoken of by the plaintive Jeremiah. He was the "Ancient of Days" whom Daniel describes. He was the "Desire of all nations" whom Haggai said should come. He was the "Branch out of the stem of Jesse," of whom Zechariah prophesied. He was the "Sun of Righteousness" whom Malachi, last of the bright-robed and radiant train, saw arise upon the earth with healing in His wings. Each of these looked at Him from his own standpoint, and presented Him in his own aspect; but they all gazed upon Christ, just as the

moon looks down upon a multitude of flowers, and the flowers look gratefully up to the one serene and steadfast moon. Oh, the Bible, apart from its Divine origin, is worthy of the highest commendation and praise ; but that which crowns it with its most surpassing excellency, that which invests it with its noblest grandeur, is the special and distinct revelation which its pages give of Christ. It contains doctrines the most sound and healthful ; precepts the most pure and practical ; threatenings the most authoritative and awful ; promises the most sweet and consoling. But the doctrines are more wholesome because Christ has endorsed them ; and the precepts are more practical because Christ has uttered them ; and the threatenings are more terrible because Christ has announced them ; and the promises are more tender because Christ has spoken them. The atonement comes and casts a lustre of hallowed radiance upon the whole ; and the book of God, beautiful in itself, is tenfold more beautiful and lovely by the flood of glory which streams upon it from the cross.

Scenes in the Life of Joshua.

There are many scenes in the life of Joshua which present him as standing out in a sort of heroic relief from history's ordinary page. There seems to have been a nobility of character about him which distinguished him from the roll of common men. Our first glimpse of him attests his nobleness, when we see him, and another like-minded, the sole inspirers of the people's courage, brave and true amidst a quaking multitude of recreant-hearted spies. His attitude was imposing when the veteran Moses named him as his successor, presented him to the camp, and exhorted him to be strong, and of good courage. We see him skilful in strategy and valorous in war on the plains of Amalek, and before the walls of Jericho. He blends the inspired with the brave when Jordan rolled back at his uplifted signal, and when his word, clothed on the occasion with permitted power, lit up the lone moonlight in the valley of Ajalon, and stayed on Gibeon the astonished sun.

The Power of Memory.

It is a wonderful faculty this faculty of memory. Its acts seem to be of the nature of miracles wrought continually for the conviction of unbelief. We cannot expound its philosophy, nor tell its dwelling-place, nor name the subtle chords which evoke it from its slumbers. A snatch of music in the street, the sight of a modest flower or of an old tree, a bow dropped casually by a passer-by, a face that flits by us in the hurrying crowd, have summoned the gone years to our side, and filled us in a moment with memories of divinest comfort or of deepest sorrow. The power of memory is lasting and influential. A kindness has been done in secret, but that seed dropped into the soil of memory has borne fruitage in the gratitude of years. A harsh word or an inflicted injury, flung upon the memory, has rankled there into lawlessness and sin. No man can be solitary who has memory. The poorest of us, if he have memory, is richer than he knows ; for by it we can reproduce ourselves, be young even when our limbs are failing, and have all the past belonging to us even when the hair is silvery

and the eyes are dim. How can he be a sceptic or a materialist for whom memory every moment raises the dead, and refuses to surrender the departed years to the destroyer—communes with the loved ones though the shroud enfolds them—and converses with cherished voices which for long years have never spoken with tongues? I had almost said, How can he sin who has memory? For though the murderer may stab his victim in secret and may carefully remove from the polluted earth the foul traces of his crime, memory is a witness that he can neither gag nor stifle, and he bears about with him in his own terrible consciousness the blasted immortality of his being. Oh, it is a rare and a divine endowment! Memories of sanctity or sin pervade all the firmament of being. It is but the flitting moment in which to hope or to enjoy, but in the calendar of memory that moment is all time.

The Human Heart.

The human heart is a microcosm, a little world, containing in itself all the strifes, and

all the hopes, and all the fears, and all the ventures of the larger world outside. The human heart!—Who can unravel its mystery, or decipher its hidden law? The smile may play upon the lip, while beneath there is the broken, burning heart; and, on the other hand, the countenance may have a shadow of anxiety, while the sunlight dances gaily on the soul. The human heart!—human knowledge can give us very little acquaintance with it; such knowledge is too wonderful for man—it is high, and he cannot attain unto it. But there is one who knows it, and knows all its tortuous policy, and all its sinister motives, and He is anxious that we should know it too.

Self-knowledge.

Of all sciences, none is so difficult of attainment as the science of self-knowledge. Whether it be from the deceitfulness of the object of study, or whether it be from the morbid reluctance, almost amounting to fear, with which men shrink from acquaintance with themselves, there are few that have the bravery to pray, “Lord, make me to know

myself." Indeed, it were a hideous picture if it were suddenly unveiled in the presence of us all. When the Lord would shew Ezekiel the abominations of Jerusalem, He led him through successive chambers of imagery, upon the walls of which were portrayed their loathsome and unworthy doings. Ah ! if our enormities were to be thus tapestried in our sight, who of us could bear the disclosure ?

Conscience.

Every man has a conscience—a natural sense of the difference between good and evil,—a principle which does not concern itself so much with the true and false in human ethics, or with the gainful and damaging in human fortunes, as with the right and wrong in human conduct. Call it what you will, analyse it as you may,—a faculty, an emotion, a law,—it is the most important principle in our nature, because by it we are brought into sensible connexion with the moral government of God. It has been defined sometimes as a tribunal within a man for his own daily and impartial trial.

It is the bar at which the sinner pleads ; it prefers the accusation of transgression ; it records the crime ; it bears witness to guilt or innocence ; and, as a judge, acquits or condemns. Thus taking cognisance of moral actions, it is the faculty which relates us to the other world ; and by it God, retribution, eternity, are made abiding realities to the soul.

Dr Newton.

The last time I heard good Dr Newton, he told us, standing on the platform of Exeter Hall, his bright eye even then beginning to grow dim, and his voice tremulous, "I am on the bright side of seventy." Can you say that? Never mind the precise age—the bright side of anything that you may happen to be? Worldlings cannot say it. It is the dark side for them—the shady side of sixty or seventy.

"This one thing I do."

Not many things. There is no fretting away of the soul upon a multitude of dis-

cordant objects, to the loss of concentration, and the consequent loss of power. "This one thing I do." Here is the attitude of a soul that is determined after a worthy purpose—the attitude of quiet strength, which will suffer nothing to deter it from the accomplishment of its deliberately-planned design. "This one thing I do." And thus alone can excellence be obtained in any pursuit which may invite the attention of men. If the man be but faintly impressed with desire, or if he hesitate between rival claims, or if he pursue the object which is chosen only in spasms of activity, the result will inevitably be disappointment and shame. "A double-minded man," it is true all the world over, is "unstable in all his ways," like a wave upon the streamlet, tossed hither and thither with every eddy of its tide. The recognition of a determinate purpose in life, and a sturdy adhesion to it through all disadvantages, are indispensable conditions of success. The outside world understands this matter well. Hence, in the great life-race, the vacillating are outrun by the steady, although the former may be fleet of foot, as Asahel upon the mountains of Israel.

Mount Moriah.

I want you to visit the Mount of Moriah with me this morning, but in order to do it with profit we must carry the child's heart with us yet, as sensitive to impression, as eager in interest, while we endeavour to elicit the principles which are illustrated, with all the vigour of a manly understanding. The thought rushes upon me as I speak, how fresh this incident seems to us.* It is one of the oldest incidents in the world's history, and yet there is a perpetual youth about it, and it is perfect in instruction still. There are some things that time cannot kill. It has a marvellous power of ruin. Courts and cabinets tremble at its breath ; dynasties are compelled before it like the foam upon the crest of the waves ; it frets decay upon the temple pile and upon the oriels delicate tracing ; it makes mounds of monarchs and of the palaces where once rioted kings and beauty revelled, a roofless ruin, where owls hoot from decaying towers and where the panther makes his lair. But there are some things over which time has no possible

* The offering up of Isaac.

power. It cannot touch fate, for example : that lives, grows, ripens in its despoite ; tradition over-leaps the many tombs in which time inters the years ; memory mocks him to destroy her ; the humanness of the heart is an everlasting thing, hence it is the old patriarchal tales, tales of ancient hope, and fear, and joy, and wrong, and sorrow, find their swift way to the hearts of the men of all the world's ages, because they touch feelings which are eternal, and strike chords that are never out of tune.

There are few hills, which are haunted by so many sacred memories, as this Mount of Moriah. Not only was it the scene of Abraham's sacrifice, but in later times, when the wickedness of the people increased, and when the Lord's wrath was kindled against Israel, the Lord smelled a smell of the burnt-offering which rose up from this mountain, and was entreated for the people, for it was here that the thrashing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite stood.

Life the Gift of God.

There are prerogatives in the power of the crown which are never delegated to inferior

authority. Prophets and apostles, by Divine inspiration, have been permitted to resuscitate the dead, and to rekindle the fire from which the last spark has departed ; but, as if to shew that there was one achievement of power that was not allowed for the creature to compass, the original impulse of being, the first breathing of the breath of life into the insensate clay, has been the work of God. Man, to be sure, has done his utmost to create. The sculptor has chiselled upon the shapeless marble the features of the human face, and the proportion has been apparent, and the attitude has been graceful, and a rejoicing world has been loud in its admiration of the artist's skill ; but though the eye reposed in beauty, no sparkle flashed from it ; though the cheek was well rounded and symmetrical, it had no mantling blush ; though the lips were true to nature, they could not speak to thrill the soul. The painter also has spread his canvas, and, with the light pencil's witchery, has drawn for us the images of friends. And when those friends have died, they who beheld the life-like appearance of the portraits have called so vividly to remembrance the forms of the

loved, that they have apostrophised them plaintively—

“Oh, that those lips had language !”

Nay, in the very spirit of Promethean ambition, man has practised something on the lifeless corpse, and has imitated the fitful workings of apparent existence—the distorted writhings of galvanic life ; but the spirit that has fled would not listen to his invitations to return, and the blood would not resume its pulse at his bidding. Life, the unattainable object of his far-reaching ambition, has returned to heights beyond him ; and whether he chisel, or paint, or galvanise, the result of all experience only proclaims more forcibly the impressive truth—that life is the gift of God.

Natural Life the Gift of God.

We go about carelessly, and eat and drink, and pursue our business and pleasure, without ever thinking of the power that quickened us, and by whom we are so fearfully and wonderfully made. We find ourselves in being, and we take it as a matter of course

that our pulses should beat and our affections glow, forgetting that it is in God "we live, and move, and have our being." These frames of ours would be inert and lifeless, like the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision, without the breath of Heaven.

Intellectual Life the Gift of God.

Our minds are active, and exercise themselves in the various subjects of knowledge; reflection is busy, and we lay down premises and draw conclusions without ever thinking of the power that has gifted us with our scientific capacity, and enabled us to invent, to expand, to illustrate, to combine: but it is in God alone that we have our being. If we are roused sometimes to inquire into the causes of the mighty operations of mind, we are apt to ascribe them to the effects of instruction and intercourse. This is so far true, as without association and teaching man would have neither motive nor disposition to aspire. But there is a fallacy at the very beginning. It is just as though we were to ascribe the developed petals and the diver-

sified hues of the flower to the skill of the gardener, because he prepared the ground, and sowed the seed, and watched the growth of the plant with fostering and assiduous care. But what gardener could ever bring a flower from a stone? The sun might shine on it from on high, and the dew might fall gently, and man might labour till his bones ached with fatigue, it would be a stone still. There must be the principle of life, or all his efforts to evolve are in vain: and who gives to the germ its vitality? Who, but God? And in like manner, if there had not been a divine infusion into me of an apprehension that was capable of improvement, all the advantages of experience and all the opportunities of academic training would have been in vain.

Spiritual Life the Gift of God.

The degeneracy of mankind has been the subject of universal admission. What is the fact to-day? Why, that the world is hung round with the solemnities of spiritual mourning,—dead, dead in trespasses and in sins. Can corpses animate corpses? that is the

question. The curdled death is in the veins of all, and motionless and still,—a very congregation of the dead we must remain, until Jesus shall say, “I am come that ye may have life.”

Rest.

The Saviour's most gracious invitation, addressed to a world of the heavy-laden, contains within it a promise of rest. O ye who have toiled so long, and who have reaped nothing from your profitless labour, take the yoke upon you, and you shall find rest unto your souls. Rest of all kinds. Rest for the vexed mind—for the bewilderments of its unbelief shall be disentangled, and it shall rejoice in settled principles which no doubts disturb. Rest for the awakening conscience—for its remorseful memory shall be still, and its accusing voice silent, and the brand of its condemnation removed, and there shall come a great calm as when the lone lake sleeps beneath the hush of summer. Rest for the wayward heart—for it shall be weaned from its idols, and all its wanderings shall be forgiven, and it shall cleave to Jesus, and flutter

into His bosom like the nestling bird, serene in the possession of an object upon which it can pour its wealth of love. Rest in acts of labour—for labour is in itself a blessing. Rest in the endurance of trial—for there shall be breathed a spirit of chastened resignation that will charm the anguish out of pain. Rest in the mortal struggle—for the enemy shall be beaten from the field, and there shall be sunset splendours in the western sky, and the departing soul shall glow in that strange light of eventide. And then rest at last,—the perfect rest,—“the rest that remaineth.” Tears shed over the corpse, wailing at the solemn funeral, nights of weeping for the living; but for the dead angelic welcome and divine recognitions, a coronation and a home, and voices from heaven assuring the listening earth that they are blessed. “Even so, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.”

The Power of Association.

Such is the power of association in the human mind, that we cling with fond tena-

city to the belongings of those we love, and cannot part from them without a pang. A faded flower coming suddenly into sight can thrill the soul of a strong man, and break up his fountain of tears, just because in the long past some dear hand touched and nursed it : the hand is dust, perhaps, but the flower is a hallowed thing for ever. The books we read, the games we played, the garden in whose shrubberied walks we gambolled, the pictures which, to our conscious hearts, seemed to follow us with their eyes, and frown upon us because of some meditated wrong, the old arm-chair in which the mother sat, the river by whose banks we strayed, wondering where it went to,—all these, and a thousand other things that we look at still with a silent heart, and through the magnifying glass of memory, oh, how much greater hold they have upon us than mightier things that have happened since ! Mankind universally confess this power, and yield themselves irresistibly to its spell. Many a hard-lived man of business carries from the exchange to the home, and from the home to the exchange again, those honoured memories and attachments that would startle the busy world if it could

only get a glimpse into the heart. There is a chair in his household always vacant to other people, but never vacant to him ; there are steps upon the stair that only he can hear ; and there are dear and blessed voices like those of angels, not palpable to human sense, but always ready and always present to greet and welcome him.

The Gospel Trumpet.

Now, brethren, are you going to listen to the voice of the trumpet, or to shut your ears to-day, refusing to hearken to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely ? There is no distinction in the sound. It is a blast of freedom to every man. But sometimes when the trumpet sounds, you know it sounds to soldiers whose pulse it makes beat quicker, as they prepare to gird themselves for the battle, and it sounds to cowards and traitors. In which rank are you ?—soldiers of the cross, who fight the battle, or cowards who flee, or traitors who plot ? Don't put that question away, for the gospel trumpet is sounding in the hearing of every one of

you, and you will have to answer by and by for the way in which you have received it.

It is not merely a professional thing. The trumpeter does not flourish his trumpet for nothing. He flourishes it that men may prepare for the battle. There is a purpose in it. There is a meaning in its blast :—

‘ Oh for a trumpet voice
On all the world to call !’

The Common Salvation.

The gospel river of life does not branch out into divers streams. There is not a broad sweep of water for the rich, the intellectual, and the cultivated, and a little scant runnel where the poor may now and then come and get healed by the side of its precarious wave. There is no costly sanatorium beneath whose shade patrician leprosy may get by itself to be fashionably sprinkled and healed. Naaman, with all his retinue watching, must come and dip and plunge like common men in Jordan. There is no sort of salvation except the one ransom and deliverance, that is purchased for rich and poor together by the sacrifice of

the Lord Jesus Christ ; and the poor beggar, his garment ragged from the havoc of a hundred storms, and his flesh bleeding from the ulcers of a hundred wounds, may dip eagerly into the same Bethesda, and emerge unscarred and comely as a child. Oh, there is a keen, loving, winsome insight, so to speak, in the religion of Jesus, which constrains it to furnish the amplest and most bountiful provision.

Spiritual Worship.

Do not think for a moment that by frequenting places that have an odour of peculiar sanctity, you can alone acceptably worship God. Have you a contrite heart? Then that can consecrate the meanest place on earth. It does not matter where the congregation may gather, only let them be a congregation of faithful men, yearning for truth, ready to make any sacrifice to obtain it, and that God who is everywhere present will reveal Himself in blessings wherever they may choose to assemble. They may crowd in the solemn minster, and while the organ peals out its alternate wail or psalm, to them it may

be a spiritual service, and their hearts may glow in purer light than streams through painted windows. They may draw around the hearth of the farmer's homestead, and while the frost-king reigns outside, their spirits may burn with a warmth that may defy the keenness of the sternest winter. For them there may be a spiritual harvest more plentiful than the garnered store in the barn that has been lent for worship. On the gallant vessel's deck, with no witnesses of the service but the sky and the sea, there may be the sound of many waters as the Lord of hosts comes down. And in the Alpine solitudes, where the spirit, alone with God, mid murmuring streams, and bowing pines, and summits of eternal snow, uplifts its adoration, there may whisper a voice stiller and sweeter and more comforting than that of nature, saying, "Peace, peace be unto you." Oh, it is a beautiful thought, that in this, the last of the dispensations, the contrite heart can hallow its own temple! Wherever the emigrant wanders, wherever the exile pines,—in the dreariest Sahara, rarely tracked save by the Bedouin on his camel—on the banks of the rivers yet unknown to song—in the dense

woodlands, where no axe has yet struck against the trees—in the dark ruin, in the foul cell, in the narrow street, on the swift rail—there, where business tramps and rattles—there, where sickness gasps and pines—anywhere in this wide, wide world, if there is a soul that wants to worship, there can be a hallowed altar and a present God.

The Love of Jesus.

How rich its manifestations, and how unfeigned; how all other love of which it is possible for you to conceive shrinks in the comparison! There have been developments in the histories of years of self-sacrificing affection, which has clung to the loved object amid hazard and suffering, and which has been ready even to offer up life in its behalf. Orestes and Pylades, Damon and Pythias, David and Jonathan, what lovely episodes their histories give us amid the history of selfishness and sin! Men have canonised them, partly because such instances are rare, and partly because they are like a dim hope of redemption looming from the ruins of the

Fall. "Greater love hath no man than this"—this is the highest point which man can compass—"that a man lay down his life for his friend; but God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." A brother has sometimes made notable efforts to retrieve a brother's fortunes, but there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. A father has bared his breast to shield his offspring from danger, and a mother would gladly die for the offspring of her womb; but a father's affection may fail in its strength, and, yet more rarely, a mother's in its tenderness.

"I saw an aged woman, bow'd
'Mid weariness and care;
Time wrote in sorrow on her brow,
And 'mid her frosted hair.

"What was it that like sunbeam clear
O'er her wan features ran,
As, pressing towards her deafen'd ear,
I named her absent son?

"What was it? Ask a mother's breast,
Through which a fountain flows
Perennial, fathomless, and blest,
By winter never froze.

"What was it? Ask the King of kings,
Who hath decreed above
What change should mark all earthly things
Except a mother's love?"

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? She may forget, yet will I not forget thee." O Jesus of Nazareth, who can declare Thee? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." Think of that love—love which desertion could not abate—love which death could not destroy—love which, for creatures hateful and hating one another, stooped to incarnation, suffering, and death; and then, with brimming eye and heart full of wonder, say, "Why such love to *me*?"

The Cottage at Bethany.

That cottage has no architectural pretensions. It peeps humbly through the embowering olives, beneath whose shade it stands. But never yet was human dwelling so highly honoured, for though many houses had entertained and welcomed Jesus, it was to Bethany that His footsteps oftenest turned; and there, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus made up the united household, was the Saviour's human home. The evangelist has

not drawn for us the curtains of the Saviour's private life. We have not revealed to us the wealthy secrets of that friendship which communed with "the family that Jesus loved." We can only imagine, therefore, the happiness of those favoured ones who were privileged with His familiar teaching. Thrice blessed must have been that family : blessed in the strong love which welded diverse temperaments together in one bond of union which no discord could sever—blessed in their common anticipation of like gospel hope and privilege ! No prancing cavalcade of honour was there attendant upon prince or chieftain ; but who may say how often in the thickly-peopled air were hosts of angels watching and tracking with loving vigilance the steps of their incarnate God ? But upon this brief dream of bliss there comes a rude awaking. The light glimmers pale through the dreary night from the window, and then sounds the voice of wailing from the dwelling where often rose the minstrelsy of blended voices in joyous song. Lazarus is sick, dying, dead. The light of their home is quenched beneath this unlooked-for sorrow. The memory of the happy past becomes almost in-

supportable. The sisters, weeping, clasp each other convulsively, and can scarcely realise that their brother has departed. They go to the grave to weep there. The sky of their life is hidden and clouded by this one sad sorrow, and—strange aggravation of this mysterious bitterness!—He, their Master and their Friend, is absent. They sent Him word on the earliest intimation of illness, but He has made no sign. No swift footsteps have hurried to the house of mourning; not a word of loving greeting has comforted them. They have heard nothing from the compassionate Teacher who has been ever faithful until now. Had He come there, faith so often whispered, Lazarus had not died. Oh, deem it not indifference to the claims of friendship that Jesus, when He heard the tidings of illness, “abode two days still in the same place where He was.” It was neither indifference to His friends nor fear for His own safety that kept the Master away.

The Recognition of Friends in Heaven.

It is a conscious and social world into

which we are rapidly passing. Heaven is not a solitude: it is a peopled city—a city in which there are no strangers, no homeless, no poor, where one does not pass another in the street without greeting, where no one is envious of another's superior minstrelsy, or of another's more brilliant crown. When God said in the ancient Eden, "It is not good for man to be alone," there was a deeper significance in the words than could be exhausted or explained by the family tie. It was the declaration of an essential want which the Creator, in His highest wisdom, has impressed upon the noblest of His works. That is not life—you don't call that life—where the hermit, in some moorland glade, drags out a solitary existence, or where the captive, in some cell of bondage, frets and pines unseen? The life of solitude about which men boast themselves, is not a life of solitude at all. That man does not understand solitude. Life, all kinds of life, tend to companionship, and rejoice in it, from the fecund larvæ and the buzzing insect cloud, up to the kingly lion and the kinglier man. It is a social state into which we are to be introduced, as well as a state of consciousness. Not only, there-

fore, does the Saviour pray for His disciples, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory;" but those who are in that heavenly recompence are said to have come "to the general assembly and church of the first-born written in heaven." Ay, and better than that, and dearer to some of us, "to the spirits of just men made perfect." This is an ancient representation of a social state, in which all affections are pure, in which there is conscious recognition of the friends from whom we have been some time parted, but with whom we are to abide in perpetual reunion; and of a home without a discord, a home without an illness, a home without a grave. And this question of the recognition of departed friends in heaven, and special and intimate reunion with them, Scripture and reason enable us to infer with almost absolute certainty. It is implied in the fact that the resurrection is a resurrection of individuals, that it is *this* mortal that shall put on immortality. It is implied in the fact that heaven is a vast and happy society: and it is implied in the fact that there is no unclothing of the nature that we possess, only

the clothing upon it of the garments of a brighter and more glorious immortality. Take comfort, then, those of you in whose history the dearest charities of life have been severed by the rude hand of death—those whom you have thought about as lost are not lost, except to present sight. Perhaps, even now they are angel-watchers, screened by a kindly Providence from everything about you that would give them pain; but if you and they are alike in Jesus, and remain faithful unto the end, doubt not that you shall know them again. It were strange, don't you think? if, amid the multitudes of the heavenly hosts—the multitudes of earth's ransomed ones that we are to see in heaven, we should see all but those we most fondly and fervently long to see! Strange if, in some of our walks along the golden streets, we never happen to light upon them! Strange if we did not hear some heaven-song learned on earth trilled by some clear-ringing voice that we have often heard before! Oh depend upon it, in a realm of perfect happiness this element of happiness will not be absent—to know and love again those we have known and loved below. And although in heaven there may

be a commonwealth, and although in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage, yet dearer than all others there will be the wife to the husband, and the husband to the wife, and the friend to the friend who have toiled and suffered on earth together. Oh, what heart is not thrilled by the glorious prospect! Ah, but nearer still and dearer, as every true and loyal believer thinks—*heaven is the home of Jesus.*

Childhood.

Childhood is one of the things that are *behind*; childhood, to which the thoughts of all men go out, even of those who have no better hope; childhood, that season of fresh hope and of divinest sunshine, with its rush, and rapture, and ever-new sensation; childhood, with its ignorant blissfulness, to which all sights are beautiful, and to which all evil is good! Oh, there is many a worldling sickened at the world's craft and hollowness, sickened far more at the craft and hollowness of his own heart, who would give the world if he could but bring back again the coursing

blood that pulsed through his veins in the comparative innocence of his childish years. One of our poets sings in simple beauty—

“I remember, I remember, the house where I was born,
The little window where the sun came peeping in with
morn ;
He never came a wink too soon, nor brought too long
a day,
But now I often wish the night had ta'en my breath
away.

“I remember, I remember, where I was used to swing,
And thought the air would rush as fresh to swallows on
the wing ;
My spirit flew in feathers then, that is so heavy now,
And summer pools could hardly cool the fever on my
brow.

“I remember, I remember, the fir-trees dark and high,
I used to think their slender tops went close against
the sky ;
It was a childish ignorance, but now 'tis little joy
To know I'm further off from heaven than when I was
a boy.”

The Poor Man's Home.

Man is born to trouble everywhere—in Arab hordes and in Siberian wilds, as well as in royal courts and teeming cities. The fog and the cloud are like the sun—they are no respecter of persons. Everywhere

disappointment tracks the footsteps ; everywhere sickness steals into the dwelling ; everywhere death waiteth at the door ; but all these common ills of life fall with heavier penalties upon the poor. They have to bear the penalties in their condition as well as in their experience. They cannot purchase the skill of many healers, the comforts which soothe the sickness, the delicacies which restore to health ; and when the wasting sickness seizes them, they have no time to recover thoroughly. The claims of the family are there ; there is the present want that must be met and that must be supplied ; and the recovery is retarded many a time by the quickened apprehension with which the invalid sees the wolf of hunger glaring in upon the loved ones through the pane of the uncurtained window. And then the maintenance of the poor man—the bare maintenance—depends often upon contingencies which he can neither foresee nor control. His prospects in life—his prospect for daily supply, for present exigency, as well as for circumstances which may in future embarrass and annoy him—all these are derived from his labour, but that labour—how contingent

it is!—contingent upon the state of trade, contingent upon the measures of Government, contingent upon the yield of harvest, contingent upon the price of money, contingent—as in the case before us—upon the thoughts, and purposes, and quarrels of people whom he never saw, and who live across a wilderness of waters upon whose breast he never cared to sail. Well, if labour fails, bread fails; if labour fails, homes fail. The more provident and thrifty may struggle against the coming calamity for a while, and live upon the results of their thrift and their care; but you can trace, as you may this day—you can trace, if that famine is protracted, the inevitable progress downward. One by one the comforts are obliged to be parted with. The little savings for which the industry of the past has toiled, and upon which the hopes of the future rested, are frittered away because the need was pressing, and like an inexorable creditor, it would not wait. The cottage comforts vanish one by one, and there is sickness of heart as they go. They have been there so long that they have grown up by the famili-

arities of years into dear and cherished friends. The garments seem to be scantier, and become more thread-bare day by day ; a depression gathers upon the countenance—a sad heart-sickness which it is terrible to see. They sit broken-spirited and desponding, for their heart is melted within them, because of trouble. One by one the articles of furniture disappear until there is that extremity of desolation which realises the picture that we have read of—

“That shatter’d roof, that naked floor,
A table, and a broken chair,
And a wall so blank
The shadow they thank
For sometimes falling there.”

“*Ye are not your own.*”

How strangely sounds this sentence in the ears of human pride ; with what unfeigned wonder does it fill the natural man ! How absolutely does it oppose itself to all the habitudes of reflection which he has been wont to indulge, and to all the trains of reasoning which he has been wont to pursue.

Perhaps princely revenues have been committed to his charge, or the honour which cometh from men has been poured upon his head, or he has been surrounded by everything that could minister to his convenience or his comfort ; and his mind has become so accustomed to the enjoyment of those things, that it claims as a right what was granted to it only as a favour. There is within us, brethren,—and such of you as have made human nature your study must have perceived it,—a strange tendency to the acquisition of property. We like to possess ; and anything which robs us of our sense of possession, robs us of our sense of peace. Seeing, then, that this is the habit of our minds, there is something startling and ungrateful in the announcement with which the text is introduced. We have been imagining ourselves rich, increased in goods, having need of nothing ; it tells us that we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked. We have been gloating upon our fancied proprietorship ; it awakens us to the consciousness that we are only stewards, that our wealth is not our own, that all our enjoyments are lent us from on high, that every comfort which surrounds us

is a benefaction of bounty. Nay, passing by all these as mere subordinates in its esteem, it lays hold upon ourselves, it grasps our very being, and in tones that are imperious and not to be misunderstood, says, "*Ye are not your own.*" And this may perhaps account for the comparatively trifling success with which religion has been favoured. It allows no compromise, it claims supreme and undivided homage. The great object of its endeavour is that for which God was manifested in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil. And in this complete revolution of the nature it allows no human merit; wealth, power, righteousness, all else that are brought forward to supplement the cross, are treated with contempt in its reckoning. Alike to learned and ignorant, to affluent and poor, to mighty and dependent, it announces one remedy—the blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth from all sin. The natural heart, which pants to have a share in the merits of its own salvation, cannot bear this subtraction from its own importance; and as God will not lower the standard of His will, will not hamper the free grace of the atonement with the frail and tangled network of human

merit, will not dilute the blood of the Saviour, the sinner remains unsaved ; the guilt of rejecting the gospel is added to the catalogue of former crimes, and religion is either degraded into a manual of commonplace morality, or unblushingly forsaken altogether. And as in all the congregations we have the honour to address, there are two classes of character, we fear that such are some of you, that your hearts are well-nigh steeled against the convictions of the Spirit, that your wills have set themselves perversely to desire their own fulfilment, and that your whole being is under the influence of the god of this world. It is, then, manifestly, important for you, and it is equally important for all of us, that we be reminded of our duty, that we listen to the voice of the Spirit coming thus solemnly, and that we understand the responsibilities and the privileges wrapped up in the announcement, "Ye are not your own ; ye are bought with a price."

Trust in God.

We are languid because we do not trust,

we are murmuring because we do not trust, we are paralysed because we do not trust. Faith is cheerfulness, a happy disguiser as well as a continual feast ; there is a gladsome ingenuity about it to find comfort in unexpected places, and to draw a prevailing argument out of the very heart of a stone. There is a prostration and desponding in the heart of a sinner when he finds himself conscious of his sinfulness before God, and if ever man had fallen from a height of privilege to a depth of rebellion, that man was David, sinning against light and against knowledge, and yet from the depth where his passionate outcry goes up to God, in the very guilt of his transgression, he finds an additional reason for its forgiveness, and he cries, "O Lord, I beseech thee pardon thou mine iniquity, for it is great," as if he had felt that in the very greatness of the sin there was a higher glory for the Saviour who could forgive the sin. There is the poor individual, the Syro-Phœnician woman who comes to Christ. She comes to Christ in the midst of difficulty and sorrow ; her heart is mute from music because there is danger and there is sickness at home. She is hardly able to prefer her petition, her eyes

seek the ground, she is overwhelmed with the consciousness of the peril in which she stands.

The Christian's Life-Purpose.

Your steady purpose in the daily puttings forth of your Christian life should be to glorify God. Every question of Christian casuistry must be settled by His will; every act must be consecrated by His blessing; all matters of earthly concernment must be judged of in the light which streams from His throne. This is, in fact, the essential difference between the man that is born, and the man that is born again—the one is influenced by motives of external pressure, but which this world bounds; the other subordinates all minor matters to the one grand life-purpose of glorifying God. And thus it must be with you when the greater obligation comes into collision with the less, as it will sometimes, when passion, and interest, and friendship, and even earthly mandate, all point one way, and duty, distinctly perceived, lifts her solitary finger in another, the decid-

ed heart, choosing the right and spurning the wrong, must adopt as its rule of action the acknowledgment of the divine supremacy, "We ought to obey God rather than man." When temptation presents itself in some form of endearment or in some mantle of beauty, and when the flesh is weak before the well-circumstanced sin, the victorious spirit, realising the invisible, should say, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" When common things, or familiar and ordinary matters of life, call for a rule or regulation, and for a standard of arbitration and opinion, you will be at no loss to find it in the apostle's words—"Whether, therefore, we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God." That is the primary purpose of the Christian's life.

The Use of Means.

It is part of the design of God, touching the promulgation of His gospel, that it should be extended by human agency. In its first ages it was supported by the attestation of miracles; but in perpetuity it has been con-

fided (never, of course, to the exclusion of Divine influence) to the use of means. God has so formed our nature that we are uniformly, and almost involuntarily, receiving impressions from each other. Life is nothing but one vast series of dependencies. So subtle and so persuasive is this law of association, that it is influential, even when we are hardly conscious of its existence. The chance word from the lips of a friend, falling upon some nascent desire like a spark upon tinder; the vision of some grave or wise one, held up to the glance of fancy so often, that it has become the ideal model of the heart's aspiring; the music of some old word greeting the ear with a strange melody, have fixed the tone of a spirit and have fashioned the direction of a life. The world is just one unbroken chain of these actions and reactions. We are bound by them; we are compassed by them; and we can no more escape from them than we can fling ourselves beyond the influence of the law of gravitation, or refuse to be trammelled by the all-embracing air. The design of God in using these mutual dependencies for the spreading of the gospel, is manifest from many scriptural

facts. The call of Cornelius, which might have been less troublesomely and more rapidly accomplished by the angel who appeared to him in vision, was reserved till Peter had taken the weary journey from Joppa to Cesarea ; in the conversion of the blessed St Paul, the human agency was signally evident in the person of Ananias, the certain disciple from Damascus. And this is God's method of proceeding still. For this He instituted His own grand ordinance of preaching, that the eternal truth might be communicated to mankind in tones of kindred speech, endearing feeling and emotion, flitting over the countenance the while, and the soul's deep sympathy welling up through the utterances of the tongue. And, in your own experience, the friend's kind word or kinder life, how eloquent the sermon ! How your prostrate spirit melted from its savage winter as a tender piety shone upon it ! How, like some rock against which the waves of the frantic ocean have dashed for ages in vain, but which was shivered in a moment by the lightning, your hearts long wayward, in after years of hardening, were cleft asunder in a moment by the memory

of some nursery hymn, or of some gentle mother's prayer!

Influence.

The stone, flung from my careless hand into the lake, splashed down into the depths of the flowing water, and that was all. No, it was not all. Look at those concentric rings, rolling their tiny ripples among the sedgy reeds, dipping the overhanging boughs of yonder willow, and producing an influence, slight but conscious, to the very shores of the lake itself. That hasty word, that word of pride or scorn flung from my lips in casual company, produces a momentary depression, and that is all. No, it is not. It deepened that man's disgust at godliness, and it sharpened the edge of that man's sarcasm, and it shamed that half-converted one out of his penitent misgivings, and it produced an influence, slight but eternal, on the destiny of an immortal life. Oh, it is a terrible power that I have—this power of influence—and it clings to me. I cannot shake it off. It is born with me; it has grown with my growth,

and strengthened with my strength. It speaks, it walks, it moves ; it is powerful in every look of my eye, in every word of my lips, in every act of my life. I cannot live to myself. I must either be a light to illumine, or a tempest to destroy. I must either be an Abel, who, by his immortal righteousness, being dead yet speaketh, or an Achan, the saddest continuance of whose otherwise forgotten name is the fact that man perishes not alone in his iniquity. O brethren, this necessary element of power belongs to you all. Thy sphere may be contracted, thine influence may be small, but a sphere and influence you have.

Let your Light Shine.

Let your light shine before men. It does not seem to refer to the active advice, so much as to the quiet exhibition of the Christian life. Let your light shine *before* men, not *upon* men, as a perpetual rebuke, like a policeman's lantern, turned suddenly upon a detected and affrightened criminal, but *before* men—something that they may pass time

after time and not discover it, and, at last, wondering at the radiance that always shines upon a particular spot, look up and see the light. Let your light shine *before* men, a steady, consistent, brilliant example, something that does not obtrude, but is always manifest, something that has no pride about it, but always shines with a certain influence of goodness, which the world will by and by very gratefully acknowledge. This is your duty, your solemn, earliest duty, to let your light shine *before* men, that, wondering at its luminous and radiant flame, they may see your good works, and, gazing up from the light-bearers in loving and reverent appreciation to their great original, glorify your Father that is in heaven.

The Universal Law of Adaptation.

In the world around us there is a vast series of adaptations of the creature to the dwelling-place, and of the dwelling-place to the creature, which cannot fail to strike the most thoughtless observer. The eye, with

its delicate lenses, the ear, with its wondrous conductors, the body, with its highly-elaborated mechanism—fitted, as they respectively are, for sound, and light, and life—are all instances of this rare, of this wonderful harmony. You will find that there is the same adaptation between the creature and the dwelling-place in connexion with the world in which it is our privilege to live. Some theologians have acted as though they thought there was some subtle connexion between materialism and sin; and the burden of their teaching has been austerity and sadness. They have ignored all Scripture, except those passages which tell of self-denial, and they have interpreted them to mean rather the sequestration from sources of enjoyment, than the transformation of the dispositions and the habits of the inner man. According to them it is our duty to wear, perpetually, a cloud upon our brow; and they have harped upon the worthlessness of the world, and the blessedness of death, with an earnestness which might almost justify suicide amongst their frenzied followers. They have endeavoured to teach that the best state of preparation for the world to

come is to be hopeless, and desolate, and darkened in this. Now the adaptations I have referred to furnish the best possible antidote to this unhealthy and sour theology. The world is evidently made for us, and we are, as evidently, adapted for a joyous existence in the world. Our organs of sense find pleasure in its objects and sounds, and to depreciate it, or to bewail it as a misfortune that we were ever introduced within its bounds—what is it but to impugn our Maker's wisdom in the disposal of the gifts of His bounty, and to reverse, in our measure, the appointing ordinances of God? No, this world is not a dungeon-keep, in which the curbed spirit, like a fawn made captive, pines and chafes for freedom. God has made it a very Alhambra of beauty and blessedness, apart from the defilements of sin ; and even where sin is, it is in the man, and not in the world. There is no levity in the waving woodland ; there is no frivolity in the laughing stream ; the rearing mountain towers in adoration, not in rebellion ; the songsters of grove and tree warble no treason in their melodies. All nature is loyal to her God ; and now in tuneful numbers, and now

in eloquent silence, bears witness to her Creator's praise.

Universal Brotherhood.

"God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the whole earth." This is the announcement of a grand fact which has never yet been successfully disproved—the essential underlying identity of the human race, however chequered by the varieties of clime and of language—one deep, constant, ineradicable identity which links man to man all over the world. It is just this principle of universal relationship which thus binds man to man everywhere, which turns the world into a neighbourhood, and which founds upon universal affinity, a universal claim. The old Roman, with the far-sighted perception of this great fact, could say, "I am a man: nothing therefore that is human can be foreign to me." And Christianity takes that sentiment and exalts it into a surpassing obligation, and stamps upon it the royal seal of Heaven. This, then, is the truth upon which I intend to found the claim this morning—the truth recognised in the

Scripture—that every man is my own flesh, and because he is my own flesh, he has a claim upon me which I cannot and dare not gainsay. Of course this general law must be modified by minor and smaller varieties, or it will be practically useless. The sympathy that goes out after the world gets lost in the magnitude of the area over which it has to travel ; and the very vastness and vagueness of the object will of itself tend to fritter away the intenseness of the feeling. That is a very suspicious attachment which clings to nobody in particular, which rejoices no heart with its affection, which brightens no hearthstone by its light. Its words may be loud and swelling, and, like the bleak wind of March, they may sweep noisily about men's dwellings, and drift the dust about in clouds ; but men only experience discomfort when it blows ; they do not trust it ; “ it passes by them as the idle wind, which they respect not.” Hence private affections are recognised and hallowed and commended as the sources from which all public virtues are to spring. There is nothing in them inconsistent with the love of the entire race ; they prepare for it, and they lead to it, and they scoop out the channels through

which its tributaries are to flow. Who shall sympathise so well with oppressed people as the man who rejoices in his own roof-tree sacred, and in his own altar-home? Who shall be eloquent for the rights of other men, but he who is manly in the assertion of his own? Who shall succour breaking hearts, and brighten desolate houses, but he who gazes with loving fondness on his children as they climb upon his knees, and who realises from day to day all the unutterable tender-nesses of home?

Now, these two obligations—the claim of private affection and the claim of universal sympathy—are not incompatible; but they fulfil mutually the highest uses of each other. God has taught in the Scriptures the lesson of universal brotherhood, and men may not gain-say the teaching. Shivering in the ice-bound, or scorching in the tropical regions—in the lap of luxury, or in the wild hardihood of the primeval forest—belting the globe in a tired search for rest, or quieting his life amid the leafy shade of ancestral woods, gathering all the decencies around him like a garment—or battling in the fierce raid of crime upon a world which has disowned him, there is an

inner humanness everywhere which binds that man to me by a primitive and by an indissoluble bond. He is my brother, and I cannot dis sever the relationship ; he is my brother, and I dare not release myself from the obligation to do him good. I cannot love all men equally ; my own instincts, and society's requirements, and God's command, all unite in reprobation of that. My wealth of affection must go out after home, and friends, and children, and kindred, and country ; but my pity must not lock itself in them—my regard must not confine itself within those narrow limits merely—my pity must go out further. Wherever there is human need and human peril, my regard must fasten upon the man, although he may have flung from him the crown of his manhood in anger. I dare not despise him, because in his filth and in his sin, as he lies before me prostrate and dishonoured, there is that spark of heavenly flame which God the Father kindled, over which God the Spirit yearns with intensest yearning, and which God the Eternal Son spilt His own heart's blood to redeem. There is no man now that can ask the infidel question of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

God has made man his brother's keeper—we are bound to love our neighbours as ourselves ; and if, in the contractedness of some narrow Hebrew spirit, we ask the question, "Who is my neighbour?" there comes the full pressure of utterance to enforce and to authenticate the answer, "Man is thy neighbour—every one whom penury has rasped or sorrow startled—every one whom plague hath smitten or the curse hath banned—every one from whose home the dearlings have vanished, or around whose heart the pall has been drawn."

"Thy neighbour? 'Tis that toiling slave,
Fetter'd in thought and limb,
Whose hopes are all beyond the grave ;
Go thou and ransom him.

"Thy neighbour? 'Tis that weary man
Whose years are at the brim,
Bent down by sickness, care, and pain ;
Go thou and comfort him.

"Thy neighbour? 'Tis the fainting poor,
Whose eyes with want are dim,
Whom hunger drives from door to door ;
Go thou and cherish him."

The Influence of the Spirit.

It was Christ's promise—the only promise that kept up the hearts that were ready to

faint under the prospect of the spiritual bereavement that they were so soon to sustain—"I, if I go away, will send the Comforter." "I will pray the Father, and he will send you another Comforter, and he shall abide with you for ever." And thus earth has been the theatre of the Spirit's labours ever since. He strives with every man that He may bring men to the truth. He is the great agent in the conversion of souls, and a measure of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. He darts the light of truth into the sinner's mind, and shews him his own unworthiness, and then He leads him to look higher, that he may see the cross as well. He strives with men that He may bring men to the truth. There is not an individual here—I am bold to say it—who has not at some time or other felt His striving. He meets you in the closet, does He not?—that is, if you ever go there. He meets you in the closet, and there in the secrecy of your spirit He uplifts your soul to heaven. He meets you in the sanctuary—does He not?—when the litanies of the people rise, and glad *Te Deums* are chanted; and there in the nearness of the worship He reveals to

you the Father. He meets you in solitude—does He not?—when the excitements of the world are hushed, when the storm is completely still, when there is no sound to distract the quietude of the soul as it opens itself before God. He meets you in company—does He not?—and often amid the charms of society, and the festivities of gathered friends, thoughts of another world will intrude themselves. Clear, piercing whispers, that you know not how to still, will make themselves heard. My brethren, does He not meet you here? Does He not meet you now? Yes, in every sermon you hear, in every chapter you read, in every expression you feel, there is the influence of the Spirit—there is a living, vital, everlasting proof that God is not unmindful of man.

The Dispensations of Providence.

The great end of man's existence in the present life is to prepare for a better. He is so thoroughly earthly, so wedded to the scenes of time, that vigorous means are necessary in order to wean him from earth

and attach him to the skies. It would save us from misery sometimes if we could only regard our afflictions as having this disciplining and corrective end. God is mindful of you when you think He has withdrawn His face, and turned aside His glance. Every affliction that causes you to feel as if the rapture of life had gone, and as if the funeral bell were tolling for all your past joys—every bereavement that desolates your dwelling and lacerates your heart—every pain that afflicts you, and every languor that enfeebles you, and every sickness that nauseates you—all are visitations in some sort of the Spirit. Oh how often has He spoken to you! Have you been one moment of your lives unvisited?

What is Man?

In magnitude he is but a speck; the everlasting hills are bigger. He is a dwarf when he stands beside some object in nature. In duration—as to his conscious existence in this life—seventy, sixty, forty, twenty years—what is your life? “It is even as a vapour, which appeareth for a little time and then

vanisheth away." What is man? An atom compared with the house in which he lives. Even that is an atom compared with the city of which it forms a part. That city is an atom compared with the country of which it is the metropolis; that country an atom compared with the continent to which it belongs; that continent an atom compared with the great globe; that globe an atom compared with the universe. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

Look at him intellectually. Here some light perhaps breaks in upon the subject. He has an understanding that is capable of comprehending truth. He has a will—"a stern, tough sinew," as one of the old divines says, "the most rebellient and toughest sinew in the whole creation of God." He has a will endowed with the mighty power of volition, by which he can accept or reject the offered mercy of the gospel. He has a memory that can live on the past—an imagination that can take in the future. He has qualities which may fit him, if he be rightly disposed, for extensive usefulness and for God-communion. But there is nothing

in that. There is no intellectual quality in man that the devil has not; yet God has forgotten him—cast him out of heaven and out of His memory, exiled for ever in everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. And man is immortal too, you may say. Flung into existence, he cannot get out of it again. He must live, and live for ever. So the fallen angels were too! Why has God been mindful of man?

Ah, mystery beyond human comprehension!

“Grace by far transcends
Or men or angels’ thought.”

The real cause of God’s mindfulness of man was that man repelled from him all that was comely and of good report in the universe. “Because ye were sinners, Christ died for you.” We must go up and lose ourselves in the love of God—the mystery that passes all comprehension.

“Pity divine, in Jesu’s face,
We see, adore, and love.”

Simple Means.

God does not in any instance supersede means, but He does in every instance vitalise them. Faith craves something tangible to rest upon, by which it can be sustained, and the faith of the man before us connects with the account of his deliverance the instrumentality of Christ. "He put clay upon my eyes"—He did it—"He put clay upon my eyes, and now do I see." It is worthy of notice how simple and common were the means of healing. There was no period of display, no gathering of appliances from afar, no mustering of celestial energies. What a grand opportunity to magnify the omnipotence of Christ, at which the world might hear and tremble! He could have mustered celestial energies—a legion of angels would have been proud to sweep down on swift wings to be fellow-helpers in the work of mercy. Simple things, familiar things, things close at hand, clay and the spittle, these are the chosen instruments for giving sight to the blind. Oh, there is nothing that shews at once the omnipotence and humanity of Jesus in tender and mighty combination more than the selection of

means like these. And the ordinary human things which the Divine Saviour consecrated became at once a mighty power. And so it is in connexion with spiritual things, and the spiritual blindness that has come over us all. Let God be in them, and the tiniest things become powerful. Let God be in them, and that directs their course :—

“A pebble on the streamlet’s track
Has turn’d the course of many a river ;
The dew-drop on the baby plant
Has warp’d the giant oak for ever.”

In the case of Ruth, her hap was to light upon the part of the field belonging to Boaz. Could there be anything more insignificant than that? Yet from that chance there sprung the royal Psalmist, and great David’s greater Son. Apostles, fishermen, and tent-makers of Galilee, what had they to do? men of vulgar associations and mean in descent, what had they to do to impregnate nations with a new life and overturn old systems? Yet God was in the track of these men; and as they spoke, uneducated as they were, the learned bowed themselves down, and held their breath to listen; and the world began to heave with a novel and blessed inspira-

tion. Oh, yes ; and if the Saviour comes to you, simple, and common, and ordinary may be the means that He employs, but there is life in the heart of them to your soul—life eternal for each one of you that will receive it. You remember your own enlightenment—how simple were the means. A word that caught your eye upon a friendly placard in the street ; a word whispered by a kind and greeting friend ; some loved one faded by your side, and a spring of eternal life gushed up to you from the dampsoil of the sepulchre ; or a man of like passions with yourself stood and told, in simple language, of the grace that had redeemed him, and there was a fire of religion kindled in your spirit that was never there before. And this is the way that God will work with those of you who are yet unsaved. The temple is open for you ; the Sabbath summons you to prayer ; the Word, the living Word, is preached to you ; the Spirit yet accompanies it with His powerful and promised grace ; and these are the prescribed and simple means of everlasting salvation for you. Don't imagine that you are of so much consequence that there shall be an ostentatious healing of the leper. No

prophet is commissioned to go forth to you, and, in all the pomp of gratified pride, strike his hand over the place and recover the leper. This is not God's way of curing either kings or clowns. Salvation is offered freely, and if you come to Him to-night you may have it. But you must have it in God's way. Your pride must be humbled ; your perverseness must be subdued. Are you coming with the cry of legality upon your lips?—"Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Do? Why, submit yourself to God. The human effort in the case of the blind man—what was it? To go to the pool. The human effort in the case of the raising of Lazarus—what was it? To roll away the stone. The human effort in the case of the man with the withered hand—what was it? To stretch it out that its power and strength might return. And this human effort for you, if you want salvation, is—

"Just take the blessing from above,
And wonder at God's boundless love."

Simple and common and ordinary are the means of salvation to you.

*"One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind,
now I see."*

The giving of sight to the blind was so noised abroad that the Sanhedrim had become uneasy already about the new faith. The Pharisees, whose credit for sanctity was most endangered, were unfriendly watchers of Christ's every movement, and this new and popular work of healing could not be passed over in silence. The man was summoned before successive courts of inquiry in the hope that some discrepant statement might be elicited which they might seize hold of, and thus neutralise the effect which the miracle was having upon the public mind; but throughout he persisted in his artless and eloquent tale, and became, successively rising into higher and yet higher heroism, the narrator of the fact; the consistent witness; the fearless confessor; the avowed disciple; and, at last, in some sort, a martyr for the truth as it is in Jesus. Brethren, when a change takes place in the heart of a sinner he becomes of necessity—yes, of necessity, for there is a fire burning in his bones that will consume him if he does not

get utterance—an honest witness, a witness for God. And there is a substantial agreement between the witness of the blind man and the witness of the new man, upon which it may profit us to dwell. As I observed of this testimony before, it is an experimental testimony. Religion is a real change. In the case of the man before us, the reality of the change was a simple question of consciousness. It was not a thing about which the man could possibly make any sort of mistake. “One thing I know”—I do not think—he does not say that—“One thing I know”—there is no doubt nor hesitation, it is a firm settled conviction. “One thing I know;” this was his answer wherever they tried to bewilder him and lead him from the main subject to extraneous matters—“One thing I know;” I have no dim conjecture nor uncertain wavering belief—a change has taken place. I know it—this azure sky, this beautiful landscape, these are things I see, and I never saw them before. Do not despise me, I am infirm and dependent no longer. Yes, God has changed me; my life has begun, and there is a rapture in my soul which I never felt there before. I cannot but

speak. "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Yes, brethren, religion is a conscious thing, an experimental thing, a change consciously realised. It is not a beautiful theory, it is a deep experience. It is not the lodgment of truth in the understanding, or an intellectual assent to the doctrines of a cherished creed ; it is also in the affection, by which we are enabled to obey the new commandment ; the heart is transformed from its former enmity into loyal, ardent submission to Christ's constraining love. Now if that change takes place upon a man, it is mighty—believe me, it is mighty—too mighty to have passed silently ; the man must know it. The Lord may not have come in the whirlwind or the fire ; but the man must have heard Him whisper in the still small voice. There may have been no convulsions prostrating the frame, there may have been no external agitations about the man ; but there must be a consciousness, deep and unmistakable, that old things have passed away, and all things become new. It is quite possible the man may not have experienced the throes and tossings of the birth-night ; but he must know that he is born—

he must know that he lives. He may not be able to tell with precision the time of his conversion ; in moments of depression he may easily trouble himself into the belief that he is not converted at all. He may be harassed with multi-form temptations ; he may be wrung with the remains of the carnal mind ; he may often fall short of the ideal of character which he has set before him as a model, to which he will aspire ; he may feel so helpless and so languid, that the only sign of life about him is that he is conscious of his deadness : but that he is not what he once was he cannot fail to know. His desires may be faint, but they will be uniformly towards heaven. He may fail sometimes in his struggles with the giant evil that has so long possessed him ; but he does struggle—and he knows he does struggle—and he would fain cast it out of him if he could. Another thing, he does not cease because he fails. It may be failing oft, but ceasing never. Like the fabled wrestler, who gathered new strength from every fall to earth, because earth was his mother—so the Christian gathers new strength from each successive fall, for it only stimulates him to a perpetual endeavour after

holiness and God. Upwards, though the path is slippery and the snow is blinding ; upwards, though the crevasses are deep and avalanche hurries hoarsely by ; though unaccustomed to such high elevation, though his labour is heavy and he gasps for breath, still upwards will he climb, stick in hand, and his friend close at his side always ready to help him when he reels and stumbles ; upward, till his life's work is over, his trouble done, his Master speaks him home to rest—eternal rest in the long glad Sabbath of the sky. Oh, can you bear this testimony ? Is there anything analogous to it in your circumstances or condition to-night. The Spirit of God will bear witness ; your own heart, in its loathing of sin and in its longing for holiness, will bear witness ; for both the witnesses join—the Spirit of God and our spirit. Oh, can you bear this testimony unmistakably, experimentally of this blessed change ?

God's Witnesses.

Conversion must leave a trace somehow. I know there is a difference of temperament ;

I know some people are very reserved in communication, and some people are very reluctant to tell of the Lord's dealings with their soul ; but depend upon it if they are converted, there is a trace of it. The countenance has a gladder sparkle somehow, the conversation has a holier tendency somehow, life has a certain manifestation of goodness somehow, the man's life is every moment bearing witness for God. Yes, he is God's witness, that converted man. Come, thou worldling, and judge him. Are not his affections kinder ? Is his walk consistent ? Has he not a more chivalrous honour than he used to have ? Does he equivocate and shuffle in the little lies of trade as he once did ? Has not he a more incorruptible integrity than in days of yore ? Don't you think his conscience more tender than before ? Ye gay revellers, ye have roystered with him full often, why shuns he now your company and your gay revels ? Why trips he not at your heels now in the race for fashion, or in the strife for gold ? Nay, be candid in your judgment. Don't scoff at him ; he is not perfect—he does not profess to be perfect. There are propensities to evil in him yet,

sometimes, unextinguished ; he is harassed occasionally by powerful temptations, by besetting sins ; he is not all that he should be, he is not all that he will be—but, hark you, he is better than you, and you know it. He is better than you. There is a difference in his temperament—he is not what he was when you and he were congenial spirits, and in glad companionship used to go to and fro together. He is not what he was before the change—oh, anything but that.

Oh, when have not those faithful witnesses spoken ? Not only amongst the fellowship of saints, not only under the excitement of the sanctuary, but in the world, in the companionship of gathered friends, in the unobtrusive living out their religion, they are not silenced ; and amid darker scenes, whilst trial bows the spirit down, it does not silence the testimony. Reproach falls upon the man, but the witness does not cease. Affliction shrivels the strength, but the spirit-life waxes into comelier and heavenlier beauty. Lo, Death the spoiler pauses abashed in his fell work, until the triumphant shout of victory has been cast up from the lips of the dying. Yes, the testi-

mony is consistent, and is sincere. All circumstances have witnessed it, and in all scenes alike, of human gladness and of human sorrow, the witness of God's faithful people has gone upwards to the skies.

An Appeal to the Blind.

How is it with you to-night, brethren? Do you say, "We see," and therefore your sin remaineth? Are you anointing your eyes with other eye-salve than that spiritual, which alone can make you see? Born blind as you are, are you resorting to the treatment of empiricism? Born blind as you are, are you going to earthly healers, to physicians of no possible value? What is your state to-night? Oh, it is sad to think that after the gleams of light and beauty that you have had in connexion with this moral change to-night, that some of you may continue just as before, sighing over the ruins of departed privilege, of departed sight, and departed opportunity, just as the wind sighs mournfully through the corridors and aisles of some roofless and deserted

temple ; and you may go on, stricken spirits, knowing nothing, caring nothing, enjoying nothing of God or His service, moaning helplessly in your travail, nothing but "blind, blind, blind."

Oh, is it so with you ? I came to proclaim the giving of sight to the blind. The Saviour passes by ! He passes by to-night ! It was on His way from the temple that He met the man that was born blind. What a glorious thing if He were to meet you on your way from the temple, and just as He goes from the temple, where a crowd of worshippers have been gathered, He meets with a man that has been born blind and heals him ! Now, if you are conscious of your state and of your peril, lift up your plaint to Him. "Command me to be brought to thee, and say, 'Sinner, receive thy sight.'" Surely you will pray, and your prayer will be heard. It shall be so. May God grant it for the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

The First Moment after Death.

What must be the feelings of the ran-

somed soul just the first moment after death—the first moment when it is about to penetrate into those mysterious secrets which no one who has ever known them has come back to unravel? The first moment after death—the spirit freed from the trammel of this tabernacle of clay, clogged no longer by the bond that has held it down to earth—oh, in what rapture must it catch the first burst of heaven's melody! oh, in what rapture must the first glimpse of the beatific vision dawn upon its eye, now purified from the film and from the shadow! and then an eternity, an eternity without an interval and without an end, for they shall be “for ever with the Lord.” Believer, wherever thou art, in whatever corner thou hast ensconced thyself, though thou art ragged and homely, though thou hast few friends, though nothing but the green turf shall cover thy clay, though there shall not be a friend to follow or to mourn thee, and though, when thou standest at the right-hand company, there may not be one of thy fellows there that shall be able to recollect thy name, this is thy portion if thou art in Christ; the word of the Lord has spoken it, and “that word endureth for ever.”

I ask you to pursue the analogy in a converse way, and to think for a moment what must be the feelings of the impenitent and unransomed soul the first moment after death. The first moment after death ! no confusion of intellectual belief then—all made terribly clear by the startling revealer that has separated the soul from the body—dread reflections on a misspent life—the awful accusations of an aroused conscience—terrible anticipations of a coming judgment—the angry glances of the Judge's eye—the unknown torments of an unfathomable hell. Oh, drop the curtain, we cannot bear it. Whither would it lead us if we pursued the analogy further ? whither, but into deeper, darker, profounder regions of unknown and of unimagined horror ? Sinner, sinner ! oh for a tone of tenderness and power that should reach thy heart to-night ; this is thy portion, however thou mayest have joined hand in hand, and made potent alliances, and rejoiced thyself in the things of this world ; this is thy portion—the word of the Lord hath spoken it, and “that word endureth for ever !”

The Efficacy of the Gospel.

When it first appeared in the world, it appeared as a universal remedy, and a universal remedy it proved itself. Sinners were converted, believers were edified and confirmed. Wherever it went it spread its divine and blessed influence, and its reputation became established as a message from God. It is as searching in its nature as ever, however potent may be the principle of evil; however, like the fabled chameleon, it can shape itself to circumstances, it cannot twist itself into any shape in which Christ cannot find it, and follow it, and overthrow it. The gospel is the only system for man—for man always, for man everywhere; man in the infancy of the world, man in its maturer years, man in the depths of barbarism, man in the heights of refinement—for man a profligate sinner, for man a regenerated saint, for man on earth—ay, and for man even in heaven, for into it thousands of the spirits of the just made perfect still desire to look. And it has lost none of its power, moreover, by the lapse of time. The sun, after it has shone for a thousand years with unabated

vigour, is the sun still ; is it not brilliant and beautiful as the first day of its shining ? A river, after it has flowed in fertilising streams for ages, is a river still, and still freshens the earth upon its banks, and makes it "to bring forth and bud, producing seed to the sower and bread to the eater." And so it is with the gospel ; it is never the laggard of the age, its doctrines never become antiquated, its facts never shrivel up ; it presents itself to the world young as it ever was, in all its strength and tone and energy ; it saves numbers still, it converts believers now, it shines with sweetest lustre and comfort in the chamber of affliction, and its praises are gasped painfully from many a bed of death.

Many of you have felt it ; and many of you have tried the gospel—you have trusted your whole salvation here ; you have brought your souls when they were racked by an agony of doubt and suspense, and there has come a hush upon the soul, as if an angel had stood by, and, with sweet voice, has whispered, "Peace, peace, be still." I appeal to you, then, has it failed ? Have you ever had occasion to reproach yourself because

you were in Christ ? If this gospel of Christ has deceived you ; if it has mocked you with fugitive promises instead of substantial benefits ; if it has denied you relief from the terrors of your troubled conscience when you asked it in the name of Christ ; if it has refused to confer blessings upon you when you asked for those blessings aright,—I, as its advocate, desiring nothing in this world so much as its universal spread, tell you to cast it off, discard it for ever as a foolish and accursed thing. But oh, if it has been the delight of your being ; if it has been your refuge, and strength, and very present help in trouble ; if it has strewed your earth with comfort ; if it has allied your heaven with glory,—hold it fast ; do not be swindled of this comfort and of this blessing now ; clasp it as your choicest treasure ; it is the word of the Lord, and “that word endureth for ever.”



The Mount of Prophecy.

“God at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto our fathers by the

prophets." There were many things that were predicted in reference to the future of nations and to the future of men. Many of those promises have already received their accomplishment; but the argument from prophecy is by no means exhausted, and multiplied and accumulative evidences are rising up from the exhumed bones of the desert, and from the deciphered rocks of the wilderness, day by day. The burden of Tyre was foretold, and the ships of Tarshish have had to howl because their strength was laid waste. The burden of Babylon was foretold, and that ancient city now sits in the unnoticed and forgotten desert; and owls, and satyrs, and dragons are the only tenants of the chambers where her princes dwelt. The burden of Jerusalem was made matter of prediction, and that queen of cities, like Rachel weeping for her children, sits depressed and melancholy, burdened with lamentation at the remembrance of her former glory. But there are multitudes of the promises which have not yet received their accomplishment, and which lead us to expect glorious triumphs for the future of the gospel of Christ. I know there

is a great deal in the prophetic canon that we cannot understand, and it never will be understood, in spite of all professed interpreters, until the light of eternity shall flash upon the doings of time. But there is very much that is clear, glorious, cloudless. A deep mine is the mine of prophecy, out of which the humble believer can extract all the glory of the kingdom. A deep well is the well of prophecy, from which the humble believer can get draughts of the crystal and refreshing water of life. I want to know something about the future of the world. I am pained at heart as I think of it; I am sickened with the contentions that are around me. Is it always to be thus? Are good and evil always to struggle? Is there to be no manifestation of a royal mind and of a triumphant power? Is there to be no supreme Arbitrator who shall bring all things to pass according to the counsel of His own will. I go up the mount of prophecy, and I read this, the inscription graven as it were in letters on the sky, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord: all flesh shall see the salvation of our God. He must reign until he hath put

all enemies under his feet. The world shall be his possession, and the uttermost parts of it his footstool." I go up the mount of prophecy, and the mists roll gradually from the face of the sky, and the fair and smiling landscape lies before me ; I see the earth reposing in its beauty, marred with no sin, smitten with no scourge, discoloured with no track of blood ; glad hymns of praise flow on every breeze, soft notes of prayer are heard from every lip, and from all the rejoicing homesteads there floats one flag of peaceful and hallowed gladness, and on it is inscribed "Emmanuel," and it is the old banner of the cross. Now, I want to know something about myself, my own individual part in the great jubilee of the world's history. I go up to the mount of prophecy again, and there, gleaming brightly in the distance, I see the walls of the New Jerusalem, the saints' abode, the temple of the indwelling God, and my heart throbs within me as I think of the city whose walls are of jasper, and her gates of pearl, and her pavement of burnished gold, not because of the jasper, and the pearl, and the gold, but because there dwelleth Jesus, and that

is my distant inheritance, my everlasting home—

“The promised land from Pisgah’s top
I now exult to see;
My hope is full—oh, glorious hope t—
Of immortality.”

The Man Christ Jesus.

The Saviour’s assumption of humanity was complete. The whole nature was taken on. He had a human body with all its infirmities; he had a human soul with its completeness of faculty and its capability of endurance, with its every capacity, with its every affection. There were three reasons which seemed to render this entire assumption of human nature necessary. It was necessary, first, because the man had sinned, and upon the man, therefore, must come the brand of Jehovah’s displeasure. It was necessary, secondly, that the world might have the best and utmost manifestation of God, and that humanity, too gross and bewildered to comprehend ideas that were purely spiritual, might see in the Incarnate Son the highest embodied possibility of being. It was necessary, thirdly, that

the felt need of the people in all ages of the world's history might be supplied—the need of perfect pureness allied to perfect sympathy—of the strength which was omnipotent to deliver married to the tenderness that was brave and deep to feel. The complete humanity of Jesus has been attested by abundant authentications. In every legitimate sense of the word He was a man with man. He did not take our sinful nature upon Him—that is only an inseparable accident of humanity; it came in after the creation, and it should go out before the end. Therefore, in every legitimate sense of the word, He was man with man. He was born helpless as other children are. His early years were spent in the house of His reputed father, working at His handicraft for bread. He grew in wisdom and in stature as other children grow; not at once, but by the slow ripening of years developed into the maturity of man. When He entered on His public ministry, and went among His fellows, He sustained as they did the relationships of mutual dependence and help. He was no self-elected reformer. He was no turbulent inflamer of unholy passions. Faulty as was the government under which

He lived, He was a loyal subject, paid the tribute money without murmuring, and submitted Himself to every ordinance of man. He was no dark ascetic ; He was a brother of the multitudes, mingling in all the grief and cheerfulness of life. If men invited Him to their houses, He went and sat down with them at their boards. If they asked Him to their marriage festivals, He graced them with His presence, and turned the water into wine ; and mingled His tears with theirs when the light of their homes was quenched, and when some loved one was suddenly withdrawn. His care for them who trusted Him ceased not with His own danger, for, having loved His own, He loved them to the end. His filial affection was conspicuous throughout every part of His life, and shone radiant as a star through the darkness of His agony. He was the man Christ Jesus. How is it that you identify Him with our nature ? What are the peculiar characteristics by which you understand that such a one is partaker of humanity ? Does human nature hunger ? He hungered in the plain where the delusive fig-tree grew. Does human nature thirst ? He felt the pang sharply upon the cross. Is

human nature wearied under the pressure of travelling and of toil? He sat thus upon the well. Does human nature weep unbidden tears? Pity wrung them from Him as He gazed upon the fated and lost Jerusalem; and sorrow wrung them from Him at the grave where Lazarus lay. Does human nature shrink and fear in the prospect of impending trial, cowering beneath the apprehended peril, and pray that dread pangs may be spared it? In the days of His flesh, when He poured out His supplications with strong crying and tears, "He was heard, in that He feared." He was the man Christ. Come, ye seekers after the sublime, behold this man—marred enough by sorrow, but not at all by sin; decorated with every grace, yet disfigured by no blemish of mortality; raying out warmth and life into the hearts and homes of men; with not an act that you can trace up to selfishness, and not a word that you can brand as insincere; with His whole life a kindness, and His death an expiation—behold the Divine Man! Talk of the dignity of human nature—it is there, and you can find it nowhere in the universe beside. "The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power," the

skill to make canvas speak or marble breathe, or to play upon men's hearts as upon a harp of many tunes, the mad ambition that would climb to fame by slopes where the trampled lie, and where the red rain drops from many a heart's blood—what are their claims to His? Hush, ye candidates for greatness, and let Him speak alone. Erase meaner names from thy tablets, thou applauding world, and chronicle this name instead. Shrine it in your living hearts, those of you who trust in His atonement, and who come by His mediation unto God; grave it there, deeper than all other names—the man Christ Jesus.

Gethsemane and Calvary.

Man's eternal Saviour; God's incarnate Son. Follow Him in the shadow of His passion. Close upon the agony of Gethsemane came His arrest by the treachery of one whom He had honoured. Patiently He bears the ribaldry and insult in the dishonoured judgment-hall of Pilate. Wearily He treads the pathway to Calvary, bearing His own cross. Now the cross is reared. The

multitude are gathered about the hill of shame. The nails are fastened into the quivering flesh ; and in agony and torture ebbs His pure life away. The last ministering angel leaves Him ; for He must tread the wine-press alone. Darkness gathers suddenly round ; and—oh, mystery of mystery !—the Father hides His face from the Beloved. Darkness deepens in the sky and in the mind—how long, the affrighted gazers know not. A cry bursts through the gloom, sharp, shrill, piercing. All is silent—it is finished ! The night, that had climbed up strangely to the throne of noon, as suddenly dispersed. The multitude, that eager and wondering had gathered round the hill of shame, separated to their several homes, talking about the tragedy they had witnessed. The moon rose on high as calmly as if the sun had not set on a scene of blood. But, oh ! what a change those few hours had wrought in the fortunes of the world. Christ had died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. Go, tell it to that despairing sinner—that man, I mean, who has the cord about his neck, and the pistol at his throat, who is just about to escape

from the terrible harrowings of an alarmed conscience, by the dreadful alternative of self-murder. Go to him ; be quick ; tell him he need not die, for Christ has died, has died to bear his sins away. Proclaim salvation from the Lord for wretched, dying men. Sound it out from the summit of that hill-side of Calvary, and let the sister hills echo it, until round the earth has spread the rapturous hosanna—Salvation ! Go with it to the wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked : it is just the thing they need—Salvation ! Ring it out through every avenue of this vast metropolis of a world, till it rouse the slumbering dust, and awake the coffined dead—Salvation ! Take it to your own hearts—be sure of that ; and, in the fulness of your own experience, let us hear your song :—“There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Meet for Heaven.

To create enjoyment for man in the world, there must be agreement between the inward tastes and the outward objects. If

you want to make a man happy here, you set about it in a business-like way, and you give him everything that his heart requires or his fancy conceives. You let competence attend his circumstances ; you let friends gather in his halls ; you let his board be well spread ; you give him a retinue of servants to attend him ; you do not let him withhold his hand from every joy with which the world festoons the track of its travellers. You have done your best for that man ; you have given him "richly all things to enjoy." Let the same tastes, let the same outward circumstances surround him, and the man will be happy in heaven. Ah ! but the circumstances of heaven are fixed already, and they are changeless ; happiness there depends on certain conditions of mind which the man has not. It is not enough, in order to make a heaven for the sinner, that you should prepare a place for him ; you must go further than that, you must prepare him for the place. It is not enough that he should hold the title-deeds ; you must work in him, somehow, a personal meetness. It is not enough that a forensic change should pass upon his character ; a transforming change must pass

upon his life. Even if he should pass into heaven—if it were possible for him, by any chance, to elude the vigilance of the seraph-guard, and to enter heaven as he is—with his earthliness unrestrained, and with all his impurity reigning—heaven would be unparadised to him; its music would gravitate downwards into a sad and melancholy *miserere*; its labour to him would be a toilsome drudgery, and its atmosphere of holiness would be unsupportable to his diseased and leprous soul.

The Fifty-first Psalm.

The psalm before us has, by common consent, been called a penitential psalm. Where could penitence find readier utterance for its sorrow? Am I addressing any one to-day, who has been roused to a consciousness of his life's dark mystery of sin, upon whom there rests a shadow, and a fear, and a sense of unsettled controversy, and a feeling of the possession of a nature warped sadly from its grand original! Is there a trouble in any spirit before me, because of an immor-

talities which it feels to be both prisoned and polluted, because of a holy ideal from which it feels divorced, because of a God whom it knows it ought to rejoice in, but from whom it seems to be hopelessly alien? Do all the longings, and all the listenings of the spirit for years pant and struggle for expression to-day? My brother, in this psalm there is the anatomy of a heart that has feared and has bled like thine. All the process of thine own perplexity is recorded here, all thy apprehensions are recorded here. There is the heart, like thine, agonised, imploring, satisfied. There is the wail, the hush, the thank-song; there is the descent into the depths, the joyous mounting up on the crest of the wave; the frantic flight from the old city of destruction, the clear heaven sight from the summit of the delectable hills. It is impossible for you to fail to trace, and to be comforted by the analogy. The same grace which pardoned the transgressions of the royal sinner, and filled him with satisfaction and rest—the same grace is this morning available for you.

The occasion of the psalm is supposed to be the mourning of David, under the searching rebuke of Nathan the prophet, for his sin in

the matter of Uriah the Hittite ; and in the structure of the psalm it is divided into two parts, the first twelve verses being the record of his vows, of the doxology which his recovered heart would sing, and of the acts of personal and official consecration in which he would perpetuate his praise.

There are two facts in the psalm, to which I want to call your attention. The first is the fact of sin. This is the basis at once of the confession and of the entreaty. There must have been in the Psalmist's spirit, not merely a general sense of wrong doing, and a dread recollection of estrangement, but a burden of personal condemnation and the presentation of particular sin. Such a plaintive melody as this was never struck from angel harps. Spirits that kept their first estate neversang such deprecating minstrelsy—from the beginning to the end, it is the record of the sinner's misery, and the supplication of the sinner's breath. There was prayer, doubtless, in Eden, in its two grand elements of adoration and thanksgiving ; but there was never prayer like this : it is depravity which has infused this new property into our wants, and which has invented a numberless range

of its own. There is alienation now, which must be transformed into confidence ; there is sin now, which pants to be forgiven ; there is remorse of conscience now, that must be chased away ; there are dread anticipations of future torment now, which must be exchanged for a serene prospect of blessedness ; there is a dark and blighted curse, that must be cancelled ere the sinner can be happy. All these are the wants of the sinner, and they are yours—you know they are—and they are mine. There is not one of you, I am bold to affirm it, who is conscious, naturally, of any other experience than this. No thoughtful mind can ponder upon its own condition, can meditate upon its own belongings, and upon its surroundings, without the conviction that dislocation has come upon the symmetry of a nature once perfect, and that broods of evil passions and vices, like a flock of birds unholy, nestle in the corners of the heart. This is the basal fact then, upon which every religiousness of man reposes—the existence of sin ; of sin, as an acknowledged fact—of sin as an acknowledged evil, which has not only tainted the nature, but which has poured corruption upon every part of every man ;

found everywhere, alike in the crowded city streets, and among the scantier tribes of the Savannah ; alike where refinement and civilisation gild and soften crime, and where in the swarthy-bearded Druse it reigns tameless as the pennon that flutters upon the lance of his djeereed ; alike in sordid man, and lost woman, in generous youth and smiling babe—in all circumstances, in all countries, in all parallels of latitude, in all diversities of language, there is no escape, and there is no exception from this disastrous uniformity of evil. The fountain has been corrupted, and the streams of necessity must flow polluted and impure. Every mouth must be stopped, for all the world is guilty before God.

The House of Mourning.

Tread softly as you enter that house. A large family surround the bed-side of the dying parent. That man is a Christian ; and, knowing in whom he has believed, he is not afraid to die. But he has a large family, and the thought that he will leave them without a protector, the thought of the

forcible disruption of social ties, pressed upon his spirit somewhat; and when you look at him, there is a shade of sadness upon his countenance. But you gaze awhile, and you see that shade is chased away by a smile. What has wrought the change? What! why, a ministering angel whispered him, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive." He hails the promiser; faith cries out, "'Tis He! 'tis He! my God is present here." He enjoys rapt and high communion with celestial visitants, and thus the chamber of death becomes the gate of heaven.

You pass by the house the next morning, and the half-closed shutter and the drawn blinds tell you that he was, and is not. You enter; the widow is sitting in sorrow. The first deep pang is scarcely over; the tones of her husband's voice, of that voice with which she has been so long familiar, rush with all the freshness of yesterday upon her soul. She is worn with weeping. But she, too, is a Christian, and she flies to the Christian refuge, and her eye traces these comfortable words, "Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is His name." It is a dark hour, it

has been a dark day, and the darkness has gathered and deepened, as the twilight came on, but now at eventime there shall be light, because her sufficiency is of God. You pass by the house again when about a week has elapsed. The last sad rites have been performed ; the funeral bell, with its suppressed and heavy ominous sound, like the dividing asunder of soul and body, has tolled, and the very clay of her husband has been rent from her embrace. He has died in somewhat straitened circumstances ; he was the whole dependence of the family, and with aching head and throbbing heart she sits down to seek about her for their subsistence. Her heart begins to fail her, but before she gives way to despair, she consults a friend ; he is a wise man, that friend, one upon whose heart the influences of the blessed Spirit have operated long, and he gives her his testimony founded upon mature observation, and a long life experience. "I have been young, and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging for bread." Dashing away the tears that have blinded her, she struggles on, and feels in the darkest hour her sufficiency is still of God.

Good Works.

You cannot possibly, brethren, mistake the testimony which has sounded unfailing from this pulpit, that the salvation of man in every case is of the unmerited grace of God, and that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of His own mercy, and of His own mercy alone, that He saves. But while we insist right manfully upon the absence of any meritoriousness in what are commonly called "good works," we shall not allow ourselves by fear of misrepresentation or of calumny to be deterred from insisting upon the absolute necessity of good works as fruits meet for repentance, as evidences of a living faith.

Comes there a man to me with boastful words, strong in sonorous comforts and in the platitudes of an exclusive theology? Makes he a loud profession to me of his personal election, of his safety, whatever betide, of the superiority of the heritage to which his faith entitles him? I ask about his life. Is he lovesome, and pure, and philanthropic, and unworldly? Is he a painstaking Christian,—like the violet, as

fragrant in the mossy hedge-row as on the table of the belted earl? Does he love the truth with a right-hearted love? Does he gird himself for the Master's sake to wash the feet of His disciples, and perform with alacrity the duty of every day, as well as mix with the elders in the gate and at the synagogue? These are questions which it behoves him to answer to every man that asketh him, not in the lip, but in the life. He may talk largely about his possession of faith; I cannot disprove his assertions. I have no discernment of spirit, I cannot pierce into the secrets of his inner and spiritual history; but the field of outward manifestation is a field that is common to both of us. There, and there only, can I judge him. I have a right to expect, that if he has any faith, it will exhibit itself in comely and congenial illustration; and I have a right to pronounce, so far as mortals may awfully pronounce upon each other, that if the fruit is lacking, there is something wrong about the root of the tree, and that if he says he loves Jesus, but does not according to the things which Jesus says, he is a liar, and his faith is vain. Brethren,

guard always against setting God at variance with Himself. The gospel is the complement, but it is never the antagonist of the law ; and a faith which would make void the law, or despise its ancient and eternal morals, is a faith which must always be powerless and vain.

Constant Obedience.

Our obedience must be constant. We must not exalt ourselves now and then into a hallowed frame, and then subside into indifference—our life a perpetual alternation between the chill and the fever ; nor must we run eagerly in the way of God's commandments for a while, and then stop and pant like a breathless racer. We must obey, not in some moods of mind, not at some periods of our history, but through all change and through the long round of rolling years. Our life must be a holocaust, offered with all its activities and with all its powers upon the altar of the Lord. Brethren, here is your duty and mine. This is practical Christianity, the pervasion of the whole

of the being with holiness : not to live upon a Sabbath-day in the cloud-land of a sentimental heaven, but all the days of the week to bring the glory of a real heaven down ; not to run away from the fellowship and bustle of the world, as if our cowardly faith could not stand a battle, but to go in and out among them, and be angels in their houses, and let them feel the quiet influence of those who have been exalted into a higher privilege and have breathed a purer air. We are to ennoble the ordinary things of life ; we are to make trade a beautiful thing, and business a beautiful thing, and commerce a beautiful thing, because it is touched, and hued, and toned, and fringed with the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Brethren, shew me where these Christians live. Oh ! they are here, and there, and yonder, nestling in the heart of almost every denomination, talking little about themselves, not always prominent in the executive, not always followed by the world's applauding thunder, and not partial to storms withal ; but often in the sick-chamber, earnest in the prayer-meeting, and present wherever there is a good deed to

be done, and with a ready hand always to help it on ; doing God's work in God's way, and content to wait until He smile upon them, and to be anxious only for His approval in the day when He shall number up His jewels.

Are we of the number, brethren ? Let us ask ourselves. Our presence here identifies us in some sort with Christ's people. Have we bound His laws to our neck ? Have we written them upon the tablet of our hearts ? Oh ! are there not some of whom, if the Saviour were to pay a visit to-day, His language would not be that of unqualified approval ? Would He not startle some of us by the warning sound—"I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love ?" Would not some of us be compelled to listen to the rebuke, sharper than stab of knife, or roar of thunder—"Ye call me Lord, Lord, but ye do not the things which I say ?" "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Happiness.

The very mention of the word happiness appeals at once to all hearts, touches our instinctive and not unworthy selfishness, and is always inspiring. The cry comes up from the multitude as eager and as frantic as ever, "Who will shew us any good?" The old expedients are resorted to with wearisomeness; men yet chain themselves at the car of power, or whirl about in the pleasure-dance of death, or climb ice-bound hills where honour holds her court, or burrow in every corner where there is the slightest glitter of the sparkling gold. One after another of the revellers disappears, each with his own cry of "Vanity!" but the chase goes on. Men do not get wiser because of the experience of their ancestors, and the world writes a book of Ecclesiastes in each age of its dissatisfied and restless history. And the search for happiness is not a phantom dream after all. There is a reality to be enjoyed even in this world of sorrow. God has not mocked His creatures with a desire which can never be fulfilled, and which therefore, can only consume. That can

never happen to any one of the creatures He has made. Just as in man's physical nature all is benevolent ; there is no duct in the body that you can look at, and say, "This is intended to bring pain ;" there is not one canal throughout the whole of the mechanism that is an inevitable channel of death ;—so in the realms of mind and in the realms of morals, there is no desire which God originally implanted which has been implanted in vain. Find me a natural instinct, and there is its appropriate outlet somewhere. Now God has placed happiness in our accordance with Himself and with His laws. While our hearts are rebelling against Him, consciously burdened with their conviction of guiltiness, we cannot be happy ; however we may lull ourselves into momentary forgetfulness in the social gatherings of the world, there will be unrest and misgiving within, like so many thorns that in our bosom lodge, to goad and sting us. While we are wilful in our rejection of reconciliation, and bold in the energy and fearlessness of sin, we cannot be happy, for we are at variance with the moral fitness of our nature, and moreover are excluded from

satisfaction by the declared anathema of God : "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." But what should hinder our happiness when our hearts are changed, and when our sin is forgiven ? If the knowledge and the practice are together in our united hearts, we may be happy, pronounced so by the Redeemer himself. There is the happiness of the change itself ; the subsidence within us of our former unholy passions ; the outflow of our transformed affections towards heaven ; order introduced upon the past chaos by the Creator, God ; the consciousness, borne into the soul by the Divine Spirit itself, that the enemy is gone, and that henceforth we are at one with the highest purpose of our Father in heaven. There is the happiness of a peace which no disaster ruffles, and a hope which is bright with the hues of a recompence of which we only unworthily conceive ; the happiness of divine parentage in the season of earth's dreariest orphanhood, and of divine protection in the season of earth's most pressing danger ; the happiness of a throne of grace never emptied of its occupant, of a prepared mansion, of a waiting crown.

There is the happiness which worldlings long for, concentrated in one long Christian rapture ; there is pleasure that is unspeakable, and which no remorseful memory embitters. There is honour, to which the world's titles are as trash, and her costliest crowns but the baubles of an hour. There are riches which justify the covetousness of a life-long desire, because they wax not old, and abide among the spirit's treasures for ever. There is happiness, finally, which dies not with waning years, which outlives departing time ; happiness which is the ever-young inheritance of the immortal spirit—the inheritance of a spirit of whom God is the portion, and of which eternity is the term.

God our Defence.

Thou, this morning, in the sanctuary, timid and discouraged believer, shrinking back at the sight of the perils of climbing the Hill Difficulty ; or afraid, as thou hearest the roar of the lions in front of the Palace Beautiful ; lift up thy head ; be not discouraged ; thy sufficiency is of God. What

frightens thee—affliction? God is thy health. Persecution? God is thy crown. Perplexity? God is thy counsel. Death? God is thine everlasting life. Only trust in God, and all shall be well; life shall glide thee into death, and death shall glide thee into heaven. "Who," asks the exulting apostle, in the 8th of Romans, "who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay," as if these things were hardly to be named at all, "nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors." Oh! the royalty of the language! It is not a drawn battle; night does not come on to separate the combatants; we have not to send a herald, after the manner of ancient warfare, to ask permission to bury our dead; we do not come away from the field with the armour hacked and scarred, and the dishonoured banner trailing after us in the dust, making it doubtful whether we have won the victory or not. "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death," he put that first because it is that generally that frightens believers most, therefore he hastens to dissipate

their uttermost fear at the beginning—"I am persuaded that neither death nor life," with its ambuscades, and temptations, and hazards, and pitfalls, really if men knew it a great deal more perilous than death—"Nor angels," if any of them could forget himself so far as to come upon an errand of mischief, and preach "another gospel," and try to seduce the very elect themselves; "Nor principalities nor powers," although the great father of lies may plant his most formidable host, and marshal his choicest batteries against us; "Nor things present," though those things present may include "famine, and nakedness, and perils, and sword;" "Nor things to come," though in those things to come may be wrapt up gigantic blasphemies and an originality of diabolism, never dreamed of yet; "No creature," nothing but sin, and that is not a creature, something that God never made, a foul excrescence and abortion upon the universe of God—"No creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Oh! the blessedness of being in this love of God, the blessing of an approving con-

science, the blessing of increasing knowledge, the blessedness of completest victory, the blessedness of gospel peace, the blessedness of perfect love. I do not know what the "sea of glass" means, about which we read in the Revelation. I do not pretend to an intimate acquaintance with those mysterious disclosures ; but I know nothing which can better image the deep, serene, reposing rapture of the spirit that has finished its course with joy. It is a "sea of glass" it has no billows, not a breath ever by any possibility ruffles it, and on this sea of glass, as on a wide and waveless ocean, the believer stands for ever, chanting eternally the song of Moses and the Lamb. Oh ! lift up your heads and sing—

"Let doubt, then, and danger
My progress oppose ;
They only make heaven
More sweet at the close ;

"Afflictions may damp me
They cannot destroy,
For one glimpse of His love
Turns them all into joy."

The Words of Eternal Life.

All ancient philosophy and religion are

empty of information about eternal life. As we ask the question, we are shocked and startled by the far-resounding echo of our own voice. The sages are all mute ; the Pythian priestess foams and wallows, but no voice issues from the oracle : and if we are to know nothing of the future except what we can learn here, it will be unknown for ever—a Sphinx without an Œdipus, an undecipherable Rosetta stone, a pyramid with a great secret in its heart that will baffle the detection of the world. And so, too, cheerless and unsatisfactory are all modern attempts to solve the problem of our destiny apart from Him who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

To whom shall we go? Poor humanity, distracted by many perplexities, bleeding from many wounds, weeping over many griefs, must go somewhere: she cannot eat out her own heart with grief and consume her own life with sighing. Whither shall we go? Where shall the great mystery of our existence be unveiled to us? Is Nature to be the temple of our worship, with its skies now bright and now cloudy, arching over us in alternate loveliness and terror?

One Way of Salvation.

Oh!—if it be needful to repeat it—there is only one way of salvation for the king and the beggar, for purple and for poverty, for the clown who plods in one idea content, and the scholar who upbraids the light and weighs the sun. Without the atonement of Christ, and without the infinite resources of that atonement, earth's holiest ones were leprous always, and all earth's populations would pass into the recompence of doom. The saint, whose life of patient self-denial is crowned by a triumphant end; the meek sufferer who endures his Father's will so bravely that his thorns become his diadem, and he is throned amongst earth's kingliest kings; the confessor who does not falter in his testimony because great ones frown to hear it, and whose voice swells like a clarion from the very platform upon which he is pilloried in shame; the apostle who girdles the world as with a zone of labour, and as with a fragrant atmosphere of prayer; the martyr who greets the stake with a holy laughter, and, upon the wings of a faith which fire knows not how to singe, soars like

the phœnix from his own ashes ;—all these—the proudest, and highest, and most ecstatic types of man, revered while they are living, almost worshipped when they are dead—have no more particle of personal merit which could be influential to purchase their salvation, than the foulest old blasphemer, or than the Barabbas of sedition and of murder.

The Mount of Olives.

Another mountain here invites our climbing—one on whose slopes we have often lingered, but never before to witness a scene like this. There are some of the consecrated heights which are connected in our memories with only one scene or incident, which has had interest about it sufficient to immortalise it. Thus, the death of Moses has made Pisgah always sacred, and the successes of Elijah have crowned with a verdurous diadem the brow of Carmel. But there are many passages in the history of our Lord Jesus which consecrate this hill, in itself of no great relative magnitude—only little

among the thousands of Judah—into a holy spot for loving eyes and pilgrim feet, and which has made the followers of the Lord in all ages of the world's history dwell with fond and pensive memory upon this mount—this solemn, strange, sabbatic Mount of Olives. So many of the events of the Redeemer's incarnate life took place on its slopes or round its base, that it might almost be called the Mountain of the Lord Jesus. It was His closet, for in its clefts He prayed; it was His pulpit, for on its gently-sloping ridge He delivered the Sermon on the Mount; it was the place of His intercourse with His disciples. "And when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives." Bethany, at its base, was often their common home, where His presence brought its sunshine, and where, in a brief exemption from His own description of His ordinary lot, He found where occasionally to lay His head. Tradition yet shews the spot where the eye of His body beheld the city, and where the eye of His mind, keen in its preternatural insight, gazed upon its future, and saw its stricken people, its burning palaces, and its judicially-blinded sons, wept over the desola-

tion which impended, and would fain, if it had but known, have averted from it its coming doom. Underneath it, swept by its darkness into greater shadow, lies the garden where His soul underwent one of its deepest baptisms of sorrow ; and there, from its crest, He rose, cleaving the upper air in conquering triumph, and in the fulfilment of His completed design. How connected it is with memorials of the Saviour ! We don't wonder, therefore, that of all associations this mountain wakes the tenderest, and of all places of scriptural interest this mountain should be most visited by those who love the Lord ; for He prayed, and preached, and taught, and loved, and wept, and agonised, and triumphed, all in connexion with this Mount of Olives.

The Resurrection.

Do you wonder, brethren, that, like Paul at Athens, we should preach to you "Jesus and the resurrection ?" Is there not something in the tidings that thrills the heart of a believer, just as an emigrant's heart is stirred in some far settlement by a sweet song of

home? Does not time appear a more solemn stewardship, and duty receive a richer stimulus, and the life that now is appear but a light thing in comparison with the life which that resurrection inspires? Dwell in this comforting thought, thou tempted and sorrowing believer, for it speaks encouragement and assurance to thee. Art thou a mourner? The sable which thou wearest is only the emblem of that darkness which has fallen upon Christ for thee. Is he gone—thy tender-hearted friend? Doth thy gentle wife no longer minister? Are thy children, entranced as by the basilisk eye, fallen into that trance that has no waking and makes no parade of pain? Oh, let Jesus stand by thee, and as thou listenest to His inspiring word the frantic shall subside within thee into the hush of quiet sorrow; thy tears, if they gather still, shall gather silently, and thy frame shall feel the pulses of a glad hope as when nature stirs in the first blush of spring. If they and thou are alike in Jesus, thou hast not looked the last upon thy friends. Thou shalt see them again; not wan and shrunken, as when the latest smile played upon the face, and there was scarce strength left to ripple it from

lip to eye, but in immortal bloom that knows no hectic of fever, and in fadeless youth that chills beneath no frost of age. And thou brave wrestler against evil, often foiled, but who dost not cease in thine endeavour, take thou the comfort too, for Jesus is the resurrection for thee. Thy yielding faith, thy slavish fear, thy maddened freaks of passion, were but the compromises of thy perverse and unworthy unbelief. All that make up the foulness and corruption of thy moral death shall trouble thee no longer. Thine Easter shall be complete, and shall be glorious. Let thy faith fasten upon the Redeemer's perfect work ; let there be a glad response in thy heart when He says to thee, "Believest thou this?" and there is nothing to hinder thine absolute and entire emergence out of the death of sin. The struggle may be long within thee. The passions that have held tyranny over thee for years may not be content easily to die. Lingering thoughts of evil, carnal thoughts, not utterly subdued, may harass thee, like the guerilla forces of an enemy—Diabolonians, lurking yet in the holes and corners of the "Town of Man-soul;" but keep thy trust in Christ, and thou

shalt be loosed from every cerement and from every grave-cloth of the sepulchre ; not even the mould of its dampness, nor its fetid and unwholesome odour, shall remain. There shall not be a vestige of death about thee, and thou shalt rise up in the faultlessness of thy new character—the Lamb's unspotted bride. This is your privilege, brethren, and it is mine. Let us realise the double consolation—comfort for the mourners who are crushed beneath some pressing sorrow, comfort for the mourners who wrestle with some giant sin ; and in our distress and in our feebleness let us hear the voice again, as once, by the charnel cave of Lazarus, it ran electric, like a line of light, to make the blood flow freely in the veins of the living, and then leaped into the sepulchre to relax even the very grasp of death itself—"I am the resurrection and the life."

Conscious Life in Heaven.

It is manifest that if the life of heaven is to be a life of enjoyment for us, it must be a conscious life. There must be no moment

of interruption in this life, although it may be somewhat changed in its conditions. In all ages men have bewildered themselves by speculations as to the mode of their future existence, and in their labyrinthine thoughts we find they have wandered into nearly every imaginable error. Some have taken refuge in the dark caves of materialism; others have held to the old Pythagorean belief of the transmutation of souls. Their inability to conceive of the spirit existing and acting apart from its vehicle, the body, seems to have been at the root of it all; and modern theorists, perplexed by the same mystery, have tried to get out of it by teaching us that the soul shall sleep until the body shall rise. But I am not disposed to yield grim Death one atom of advantage over the diviner part of man. If for ages he can paralyse my soul, then the Saviour has gained only a partial triumph. It is as impossible to reconcile this view with the teachings of Scripture, as it is to refrain from being humbled by it. We feel it as an insult upon our nature, just as a patriot writhes under some brand of national dishonour. When Paul passed through that memorable mental struggle, it was no idea of

interrupted life that made him hesitate. "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." "Far better!" What, that that mighty mind should cease its thinking, and that that loving heart should be for ages still, and that that resistless energy should be cribbed, powerless, and unconscious, through a cycle of years! Far better!—nay, verily, if this were the alternative, better a protracted existence upon earth—that were far better than to go down into the dust dishonoured and inactive for ages. Ah! but Paul knew better than that. He knew full well that the moment he was released from mortality, he should be with Christ, which is far better; that to close his eyes upon the fair presences of this world would be only to open them upon the presences that are higher and that are diviner, and with this consciousness heaven came into his soul. Yes, brethren, that solemn other world is a world of conscious life. There is not a moment's interval of slumber for the soul. We die, but we do not cease to be; we only change the conditions of our being. For the soul, in the first instant of its immortality, there is an antici-

pation of the last assize. The pure have the foretaste of their own eternal happiness, the ungodly have premonitions of their own eternal doom. The paradise into which the righteous are ushered, and where they, surprised to find themselves, associate with the dying thief and with the dying thief's Redeemer, is like the heaven which it adjoins, undeluged by one wave of trouble. The dungeon where the impenitent abide their trial is like the hell which it approximates, unvisited by one ray of hope. For all practical purposes there comes the judgment to every man in the first moment of his departure from the body, when the countenance is scarce calmed from the throes of the dying convulsion, and when the cold mortal sweat has only just been wiped from off the marble brow. Oh, it is a thought at once animating and awful! There is no human soul which from the days of Adam until now has ever dwelt in clay that is not *alive to-day!* It is a conscious world into which we are rapidly passing.

Precious Promises.

It is not my Bible this, it is not your Bible this ; it is our Bible, it is common property, it belongs to the universal Church. We have no sympathy, of course, with those who would monopolise this sacred treasure, keep this light of the gospel burning, and that with a precious dimness, only in the study of the priest, or fettered, as it used to be, like a curiosity, to the altars of the churches. Thank God, these days of darkness are gone by for ever ; and yet there is a Church somewhere, professedly Christian, which denies to its members the light and comfort of the Bible in their own tongue, thus most absolutely "exalting itself against all that is called God." Oh most foul corruption ! Deprive us of the Bible ! As well forbid us to gaze upon the jewelled sky, or to be fanned by the wind and searching air. Deprive us of the Bible ! Call it a sin for us to look at the sun, and to bask in the blaze of his enlivening beams ! The very same Hand that launched yon orb upon the ocean of life, and bade him shine upon the evil and the good, has sent this orb into the world, and has sent it on

purpose that it may be a light to all our feet, and a lantern to all our paths. We devoutly thank the good Spirit of the Lord that He put it into the hearts of our forefathers to protest against so flagrant and monstrous an impiety. We cannot afford to be thus robbed of our birthright, to be thus cheated of our inheritance, to be thus basely swindled out of the possession of the Book of God. It is the legacy of the apostle's labour, the bulwark of the confessor's faith, the purchase of the martyr's blood. Thank God ! we have the Bible in possession ; let us prove that we love it by drawing from it all the encouragement which its heaven-inspired pages are calculated to afford, and by cleaving to it with an intensity of attachment and affection which all the efforts of scoffers and traitors will never be able to disturb.

We say, then, we have a right to expect this sufficiency, because it is promised in the Bible. We gather it from the declarations of Scripture. Listen to them, you that are in Christ—listen to them ; they are yours :—
“ Thus saith the Lord, who created thee, O Jacob, and formed thee, O Israel ; fear not for I have redeemed thee ; I have called thee

by thy name." Oh what a beautiful thought that is! How many believers were there, that in the early ages of the world, in the patriarchal and Levitical times, went up by faith in a Saviour to come! How many thousands upon thousands have listened to apostolic teaching, and rejoiced in the gladness and the beauty of the new covenant! How many thousands upon thousands in all succeeding ages have there been who have participated in the same hope, and enjoyed the same immunity from sin! How many thousands upon thousands are there now upon the earth working out their salvation with fear and trembling! How many thousands upon thousands shall come into the Church in that day of its millennial fulness, when the gates of it shall not be shut day or night, because the porter shall have no chance of shutting them, the people shall crowd in so fast! Now think of all this mass of regenerate minds, believers past, believers present, believers future, and then come and hear God saying, "I have called thee by thy name," to every one out of that mass. "I have called thee by thy name. Thou art not lost in the crowd. I did not know thee

simply as a believer in Jesus. I know all about thee, and could at any moment call thee by thy name. Tell the world the story of the fears from which thou hast been delivered, and what struggles thou hast made against evil, and of all the hope and joy that have made thy path jubilant and glad. I have called thee by thy name. Thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; through the rivers"—deeper than the waters—"they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." "The Lord God is a sun and a shield," light and defence: we do not want much more in our passage. "He will give grace and glory;" and if any of you are so perversely clever, so mischievously ingenious in multiplying arguments in favour of your own despair, that you can think of some blessing that is not wrapped up either in grace or glory, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." "Fear not, I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. Cast all thy care upon Me, for I care for thee."

Are you still dissatisfied? God condescends to expostulate with you.

Mount Sion.

Oh, it is a happy thing to have come to Mount Sion! Only think of the companionship. I cannot enlarge upon it. The apostle takes you very rapidly through it in the verses in connexion with the text. The most exalted associations in the universe become yours if you are faithful in the improvement of your privileges. When you come to Mount Sion, there will be an innumerable company of angels. Heaven and earth are reconciled and united in the new covenant, and an innumerable company of angels smile down upon the church of the first-born, upon the earliest regenerated, upon the predestined heirs of that heaven in which they abode from the beginning. The chariots of God on Sinai were twenty thousand, even thousands of angels, but they terrified the people then, and the poor multitude quailed down on the plain, stricken with the consciousness of sin. The angels live yet, and are bright in the

glory of their first estate, but they minister to the people now ; they bear in their hands some helpless child of grace lest in the world's rugged and wayward pilgrimage he should dash his foot against a stone. And they look on, for there is no envy in the angels now. There was once, when one of them fell because of it, but they look on now, sympathetic and unenvying, while poor ransomed mortals are lifted up into a glory that is higher and brighter than theirs. And then, besides this, you come into union with all that believe, all that are professors of the same precious faith, and whose names are written in heaven—your hallowed confederacy. You can claim help from sufferers everywhere ; it is a commonwealth. Your wants and sorrows are the wants and sorrows of all. The sympathy of the Hebrew was a very contracted sort of thing—bounded by kindred and clanship, and so on. Hence the priest and the Levite could not come down from the properties on the other side of the way and assist the poor plundered stranger. But the sympathy to which you are entitled is a sympathy catholic as the heart of Christ, and universal as the brotherhood of man, “Ye are come to God,

the *Judge* of all." He was the special law-giver to the Hebrews, and yet they dared not come to Him ; but the energy and force of this passage in reference to the Christian is, that through Christ he may come straight up to the *Judge*,—not to the Father, but to the Judge,—and claim, by virtue of his substitute, acquittal, and smile, and recompence, and reward. And then, "Ye are come to the spirits of the just made perfect." For them the tears are shed—for them the crown is won. But you are linked to them yet—by covenant, and by struggle, and by faith you mingle with them. Across the dark waters which separate you there are mutual interests and a hearty oneness of feeling. They look down—a cloud of witnesses—in loving and helpful encouragement of your strife, for they know what it is. They have struggled themselves, and have themselves overcome ; and you, at the heat of the battle, gaze wistfully upwards towards them where they are in their brightness and in their beauty, and—

"E'en now by faith you join your hands
With those who went before,
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
Upon the eternal shore."

And then, crown of all other privileges—we could not leave that out—the reason why all other privileges are inherited: “Ye are come to Jesus the Mediator, and to the eloquent blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” The Hebrew’s day of atonement only came once a year—Jesus is ever nigh. In all your lapses and shortcomings—your sudden yieldings to temptation—your unworthy acts of compromise to evil, there is heaven and the Divine Advocate; here on earth is the open fountain; your means of propitiation are ever at hand. The voice that pleads for you does not know how to be silent. The tired sun may pause sometimes, perhaps, in his march—the light may drop upon weary wings—there may come a shadow upon the bright hues of the ocean, and a tremor of age upon the everlasting hills; but through all times, and through all change, the atonement retains its efficacy, and the speaking blood yet pleads with its glad tidings before the throne. “Ye are not come to Sinai, but to Sion.

Knowledge.

Time was when it was fashionable to depreciate knowledge : time was when it was fashionable, in certain circles, to dwell on the pious but untaught cottager, who knew of no book but his Bible, who deemed the world to be wrapt up within the few miles or acres of his own parish ; who thought the moon, as she walked in brightness, to be no bigger than his father's shield ; and the stars that glitter in the sky only as the light points in the kingdom of heaven, as the nails in the floor of the city that hath foundations : but all this is mere sentimentalism now. Such a man may become the pearl of great price ; he may be gifted for the performance of duty, and gladdened with enjoyments of privilege, and sustained by immortal hope ; but harkye, one thing he lacketh—he should add to faith, knowledge. It is enlightened piety that is progressive, to which, bating not a jot of the vitality of its faith, preserving all the original warmth of freedom, there is added an all-comprehensive survey of the mighty evidences of truth, a view of the innumerable domains which cluster in the economy of

God. Then it is that the Christian, contemplating delightfully the manifestations of redemptive energy, traverses step by step God's extensive and excellent government—

"Soaring on Contemplation's wing to trace
The continuity and amplitude of unnumber'd worlds;
Sees all things moving in one glorious circle,
Whose centre and circumference is God;"

and hears alike from nature and from revelation, and from earth and air, and sea and sky, the blending voice of solemn music: "For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory both now and for ever."

The Faithful Minister.

"Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." "In the sight of God." Ah! that is the thought that hallows it. All our endeavours for the enlightenment of our fellows are under the felt inspection of Almighty God. His eye marks the effort,—His voice, "I know thy works," is constantly inspooken to the soul. It is necessary that we should feel this, in order to fit us for our duty. If we do not feel this, we

shall have no courage. Depend upon it, the heroism which the pulpit needs—which it never needed in this world's history half so much as it needs to-day—the heroism which the pulpit needs, which the ministry must have, will not be wrought in the soul, unless this thought is there. There is so much to enslave a man : the consciousness of his own unworthiness,—the weakness of his best and holiest moments,—the love of approbation, which forms a natural instinct, swells often into a sore temptation,—the reluctance to give offence, lest the ministry should be blamed,—the haunting anxiety as to what men think of him and say of him ;—oh ! how often have these things checked the stern reproof and the faithful warning, and made the preacher the slave, instead of the monarch of his congregation ; and, instead of the stern, strong, fearless utterances of the prophet, you may stammer forth his lisps with the hesitancy of a blushing child ! Depend upon it, this is no light matter. It requires no common boldness to stand single-handed before the pride of birth, and the pride of rank, and the pride of office, and the pride of intellect, and the pride of money, and to rebuke their trans-

gressions, and to strip off their false confidence, and tear away their refuges of lies ; but if a man has only burned into his heart, that he is speaking in the sight of God—ah ! he will do it. Yes ; God-fear will banish man-fear. He will feel that, for the time, the pulpit is his empire, and the temple is his throne ; and, like another Baptist, he will thunder out his denunciations against rich and poor together, with his honest eyes straight flashing into theirs : “ Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

“ In the sight of God.” Give him that thought, and he will be tender as well as brave. He will look upon his congregation as immortal ; he will see in each one before him (oh, the thought is overwhelming !) an offspring of the Divine, an heir of the everlasting ; and in this aspect of it he will tremble before the majesty of man. He will be awe-struck, as he thinks of trying to influence them for eternity. There will be no harshness in his tones, there will be no severity in his countenance. If the violated law must speak out its thunders, it will be through brimming eyes and faltering tongues. He will remember his own recent deliverance ;

like Joseph, he will scatter blessings round him with large and liberal hand ; but there will be no ostentation, there will be no vanity, for he will remember that he is but the almoner of another's bounty, and that his own soul has only just been brought out of prison. He will be like one shipwrecked mariner who has got upon the rock, and is stretching out a helping hand to another who yet struggles in the waters ; he that is on the rock knows that he has only a slippery footing, and that the yawning ocean is beneath him. Oh ! let us realise that we are in the sight of God, and we shall have larger sympathies for man. We shall have more of the spirit of Him who "came eating and drinking," and who was "the friend of publicans and sinners." There will be no fierce rebukes, no proud exclusivism, no pharisaical arrogance then. The sleeper will not be harshly chided ; the remonstrance of affection will yearn over him, and the tear will gather in his eye as the invitation is given, or the regret is breathed : "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." "Come, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

"In the sight of God." That will help us to persevere. We shall be constant, as well as brave and tender, if we realise continually that we are in the sight of God. Though difficulties multiply, this will prevent us from becoming weary and faint in our minds. We shall remember Him who endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself ; and through perverseness and obduracy, whether men will hear, or whether men will forbear, we shall labour on for the cause of Christ, and for the good of souls. We shall not be satisfied with good report, with extensive popularity, with decorous congregations, with attention, settled and serious, upon every countenance. We shall want souls. We shall press right away through, to the great end of restoring the supremacy of conscience, and bringing a disordered world back again to its allegiance to God. This is our life-work, and we are doing it day by day—unfaithfully, imperfectly—but we are doing it. Moral truth upon the mind of man is something like a flat stone in a churchyard through which there is a thoroughfare. Hundreds of pattering feet go over it day by day ; familiarity with it has weakened the impres-

sion, and time has effaced the letters. The foot of each passer-by adds something to the work of decay ; but God has sent us with a friendly chisel to bring it out again into sharp, clearest, distinctest outline before the spirits of men. That is our life-work, and we are labouring on amid the driving sleet and pelting rain,—jostled now and then by the rude and heedless passenger,—fitfully looked at by those who flit away to the farm and the merchandise,—regarded with a sort of contemptuous admiration by those who admire our industry, while they pity our enthusiasm. Patient, earnest workers, we must labour on, and we intend to do so. God helping us, the ministry of reconciliation is to be proclaimed here, Sabbath after Sabbath, universally, unto those who will come, without money and without price ; and verily, we shall have our reward. I cannot labour in vain. What, think you, would sustain me under the pressure of multiplied excitement, and multiplied sorrow, and multiplied labour, but the thought that I cannot labour in vain ? The words I have spoken to-night are flung forward, and they have lodged in the conscience, and I cannot recall

them : simple, well-known Bible truths, they have gone into your consciences, and I cannot recall them. But they shall come up some day. You and I may never meet again, until we stand at the judgment-seat of God ; then they shall come up—*then*, and, verily, I shall have my reward. I shall have it, when some fair-haired child stops to spell out the syllables upon that flat stone, and goes away with a new purpose in his heart ; I shall have it, when some weather-beaten man, bronzed with the hues of climate and the shades of years, takes the solemn warning, numbers his days, and applies his heart unto wisdom ; I shall have it, in the welcome given to my ascending spirit by some whom I first taught, it may be unworthily, to swell the hosanna of praise, or to wrestle in all the litanies of prayer ; I shall have it, in that smile that wraps up all heaven in itself, and in those tones of kindness which flood the soul with ineffable and everlasting music : “ Well done, good and faithful servant ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” I leave with you and with the Spirit the word of His grace, praying that He who alone can accomplish it, may give it life and power.

God Mindful of Man.

How is God mindful of man? I need scarcely put the question, for every phase of man's life, every aspect in which it is possible to look on him, give the answer. He is mindful of man in every moment of his existence—mindful of infancy on its mother's breast or in its nurse's arms. Who else can understand an infant's language, and interpret an infant's look? He is mindful of boyhood in the season of passionate and wayward youth, when it sports with existence and tosses it about as if it were one of the playthings of its pleasure. He is mindful of manhood in the toils of active life—of age when all other mindfulness terminates, and when the ties to earth have been loosened one by one. He is mindful of them all. And so constantly is this mindfulness manifested—so intense and all-pervading is this essence, that we might almost adopt the language though not the spirit of the Pantheistic philosophers, who tell us that whatever is is God.

And then He is mindful of us inasmuch as He has provided all things needful for

our existence. You cannot look around you on the creation of God without discovering that everything that is is for you. For man has the creation been furnished, and the earth formed and fitted that he may dwell on it. For man the sun rises in the east, and pursues its course along the heavens, and shoots out his beams of fire. For man the moon and stars perform their nightly revolutions round the midnight throne. For man refreshing zephyrs breathe, and purifying winds blow, and gentle dews rise from beneath, and fertilising rain-drops descend from above. For man the earth is enamelled with flowers and stored with plenty. For man springs gush from the rocks and the throb of the ocean waves is perpetually sounding. All orders of creation bestir themselves when he speaks, and are alive in their endeavours for his benefit. Nature brings the keys of her magnificent treasure-house, and lays them, a vassal, at the feet of man.

He is mindful of us again because He has provided everything not only for our existence but for our happiness. Every portion of the human body, fitting harmoniously

together—every duct—every muscle—every nerve—all are of exquisite workmanship, and all shew the benevolence of God. For the happiness of His creatures He has gifted us with the innocent pleasures of sense ; He has annexed enjoyment to every action of the life ; so that when body and mind are alike in health we can neither eat, drink, walk, talk, or sleep, without sensations of pleasure. He has gifted us with powers of imagination—made us susceptible of the rich poetry with which He has filled creation. He has given us the capacity for high thoughts and feelings. He has endowed us to expand, to analyse, to illustrate, to compare, to combine. He has gifted us with the principle of friendship ; He has implanted in us the social nature. He has gifted us with the pleasures of hope, drawing comfort from every element of sorrow, and soothing each Marah of the heart's bitterness. He has gifted us with the pleasures of memory, embalming the recollection of the past in an amber that never fades away, and that is proof against the corrupting influences of time, thrilling again the spirit with the pleasures that once thrilled the

heart in youth. He has gifted us, above all, with the pleasures of holiness, the blessed feeling of conscious pardon, the calm satisfaction of assured faith, the enriching comfort of the Holy Spirit—heaven around us, heaven above us, heaven beyond us, heaven within us, and the bright and cheering prospect of the enjoyment of that heaven for ever. Infidels tell us that God has flung this world from His hand, and has then left it to shift for itself, and deprived it entirely of His paternal care. God points to man endowed thus richly, and tells them that they lie. Infidels have insinuated that if there be a God, He dwells in some far-off laboratory of power, but that this world of His creation is now orphaned of His grace. God points to all the creation rejoicing in its fitness and in its harmony, and bids them listen to its song.

“ The solemn mountain lifts its head, th’ Almighty to proclaim,
The brooklet from its crystal bed doth leap to greet His name;
High swells the deep and fitful sea, upon its billowy track,
And red Vesuvius opes its mouth, to hurl the falsehood back.

No God! With indignation high, yon fervent sun is
stirr'd,
And the pale moon turns paler still, at such an impious
word;
And from their thrones in heaven the stars look down
with angry eye,
That thus a worm of dust should mock eternal majesty."

"Tell me, art thou a Roman?"

"Tell me, art thou a Roman?" It is a suspected criminal who is thus asked by one who is charged for the time with the arbitration of his destiny. While the cheek of the inquirer is clouded as with the shadow of an apprehended trouble, his eye lights up with a glance of pride and envy. "Tell me, art thou a Roman?" Didst thou step easily into the heritage which it was too costly for me to obtain? It was my life-long ambition to acquire the citizenship, and at length the kindly drachmas countervailed the prejudice of alien birth; but thou, of mean estate and in evil fortunes—thou, who seemest to have gathered about thyself the popular hate—thou, whom I have just sifted by scourging—art thou a fellow-heir of this world's foremost privilege? Then answered Paul, in all the

dignity of patriotism—in the majesty without the insolence of patriotic pride, “But I was free born.” That must have been no light consideration which could induce him lightly to regard such a privilege, or to prefer to it any other inheritance ; and yet the faith which had changed the current of his life had sublimed his hopes as well, and in the text he speaks of himself as a seeker after a better country ; and his vaunt is not that he is a Roman citizen, but that his conversation (or citizenship, for that is the real meaning of the word)—his conversation or citizenship is in heaven. There he has laid up his treasure, and thither, as to their source of inspiration, his hopes and wishes fly.

We are Christians.

We are Christians ; it doth not beseem us, therefore, to act as worldlings do. The world is their theatre—their treasure-house ; they look and live no higher : but we, of nobler birth and higher expectations, listeners to a holy calling, waiters for the fruition of a cherished hope—let us free ourselves as we

ought to do from the trammels of a sensual bondage, mindful of our own rank and of our destiny: let us beseem ourselves comely, "for our conversation is in heaven." Brethren, the need for a warning like this, an exhortation like this, based upon the memory of such privilege, has not certainly ceased. The world, in which many of you mingle in six days' passionate toil, the ordinary cares of labour made a very drudgery by the fierce competitions of the time, has yet, unhappily, a power on the seventh, when another lordship should take the possession of your soul: and there are none of you, perhaps, that are so free from its influences of distraction or depression, that you are above the chance of taint, and above the need of warning. It cannot be amiss, therefore, for us to-day to remind you of your heavenly citizenship, that you may be grateful as you think upon its source, that you may be stimulated to discharge its duties, and that you may be comforted amid life's perils and sorrows by the thought of the immunities which it confers—"For our conversation is in heaven."

Ezekiel's Vision.

I have somewhere seen a picture, which, in brief words, and from dim memories only, I will endeavour to describe. The scene is in the far East ; the hour, when the earth is just lighted up with that rare, oriental sunlight which we Westerns long to see ; the time, the sultry August, when the fierce sun has it all his own way, and the country has a sickly cast upon it, as if it fainted with the intenseness of the glare. The plain is scorched and arid, and the river running between its sedgy banks seems to have hardly strength enough to propel its own sluggish stream from the mountains beyond. Beneath a group of ancestral palms stands a knot of Egyptian peasants, swarthy and muscular, talking wildly to each other, and with eyes strained wistfully in the direction of the south, in which quarter there seems to hang an indescribable haze, the forecasting shadow of some atmospheric or other change. Why look they there so eagerly ? Why do they gaze so intently just where the river faintly glitters on the horizon's dusky verge ? Oh, because they know, from the experience of

years, that the time has come for the inundation of the Nile. They do not know the processes, perhaps, by which the waters are gathered ; how in the far Abyssinia the sources of wealth are distilled ; but, as certainly as if their knowledge was profound and scientific, do they calculate upon the coming of the flood. And they know, too, that when the flood does come, that scorched plain shall wave with ripening grain, that there shall be corn in Egypt, and that those blackened pastures shall then be gay with such fertile plenty, that all the land shall eat, and shall be satisfied ; for “everything shall live whither the river cometh.” And so marvellous shall be the transformation, that the Turkish description of the soil of Egypt shall be almost realised—that for three months the earth is white like pearl, for three months black like musk, for three months green like emerald, and for three months yellow like gold. This picture has struck me as being a very vivid and forcible representation of Ezekiel’s vision, embodied in the experience of Eastern life. Nothing, surely, can better represent the moral barrenness of the world—a wilderness of sin—than that plain, on which the consum-

ing heat has blighted and withered the green earth, and induced the dread of famine ; nothing can better set forth the grace and the healing of the gospel than the flow of that life-giving river ; nothing can better image to us the attitude befitting all earnest Christian men than the wistful gaze of those peasants to the place whence the deliverance shall come, that they may catch the first murmur of the quickened waters, and feel and spread the joy. Of course, there is a spiritual application of the vision before us : it seems to have been given for the gladdening of the stern Ezekiel, as well as ourselves ; for the inspiration of the hopes of the olden time, as well as for the rejoicing of these latter days in its fulfilment. The spiritual application, I need not remind you, applies to the gospel of Christ, made effectual by the Holy Ghost for the healing and for the salvation of men. You will not fail to remember that the gospel is often presented to us in the Bible under the same figure. Under the similitude of living water, its blessings were promised to the Samaritan woman. The great and divine Teacher, who lifted up His voice on the last great day of the feast, announced that the

heart of each believer should be as a fountain of living water ; and in identity with the seer of the olden time, and with the evangelist of the new, John tells us of the river of life, "clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God, and of the Lamb." We cannot err, therefore, on this occasion, when we present the holy waters as emblematic of the scheme of perfected atonement, made efficacious by the power of the Spirit of God, and adapted to the salvation of the world.

"I Stand between the Living and the Dead."

Literally it is true, in connexion with this subject, I stand between the living and the dead. How difficult it would be, how impossible it would be to classify the individuals that are now before me as to educational status, as to their intelligence, as to their tempers, as to their moral culture, as to any one subject upon which it is possible to classify individuals ; but to the broad eye of God, looking down upon us now, there are just two classes—the living and the dead !

To which of these two classes do you belong ? Those are living who have come to Christ and are resting upon Him ; those are dead who are yet in a state of nature, or who have fled for refuge to any refuge of lies. I stand between the living and the dead. Some of you are living perhaps. Are you ? You hardly know, you say. Your only evidence of life is that you are conscious of your deadness. Well, there is life there. That is more than a dead man has. The consciousness of deadness is itself a sign of life—equivocal, unworthy, unsatisfactory, but still there is life. Perhaps yours is the life of an invalid, spent only in complaining—perhaps yours is but the life of a babe, that can do nothing but cry ; still there is life, and where there is life there is hope—where there is life there is susceptibility and growth. Go to the Source of life, and get that life and that strength. Get richer draughts of life coming from the fountain, so that the supplies may daily lead you unto life eternal. Then shall the life be imparted to you yet more and more even unto the end—even unto the end. Some of you are dead—dead in trespasses and sins ; you are going on, heedless and light-hearted

children of the world, but you have nothing beyond ; this world is your all. A sudden stroke separates you from this world, and your hopes go no further. No man knows what awaits you beyond death. You are dead in reference to the spirit-world—dead in trespasses and sins. Oh, I do rejoice that I can come to you to-night with the publication of life. I can stand upon the sepulchre and roll the stone away, and in the name of my Master exclaim, “He that believeth in Jesus, even though he were dead, yet shall he live. Whosoever liveth and believeth in Jesus shall never die.” Strange it is, and yet not more strange than true, the best gifts in the universe, the costliest gifts in the universe, are the freest gifts in the universe, and that which the wealth of Australia could not buy is offered without money and without price. Brethren, it is for you ; I offer it to you to-night. In the name of my Master, I offer you life to-night. Neighbours may scoff at you ; infidels, who don’t believe in the existence of a life to come, may deride you ; domestic ties may try to hold you down ; but as Christian, in the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” convinced that it is your duty, flee from the

city of destruction with your finger in your ear, crying, "Life, life, eternal life!" and rush forward unto the wicket-gate, and into the Interpreter's house, and near the cross on Calvary the Lord will bless you in your pilgrimage, and bring you safely and speedily home. Look ye, if ye list. Don't say you have not had life offered to your acceptance. I call God to witness against you very solemnly that to-day I have set before you life and death. Don't kill yourselves; you will do so if you refuse life. God will not kill you. He has never decreed the perdition of any creature He has made. Ministers would not kill you—they would fain have you live—they give warning upon warning that you may live. Oh, a terrible scene rises up before me. I fancy myself somewhere; it may be in the country, perhaps, in this beautiful island of ours. See, we will put the scene as I have sometimes seen it. At the corner of four green lanes, where everything in the external aspect seems to smile; yet there is something here which makes the peasant whistle to himself as he goes by at night, or pass it with bated breath, and which causes the children not to choose the spot to play

in, for it seems haunted with a nameless horror. If I ask what it is, they tell me in a whisper, "This is the grave of a suicide." An unhappy sod ; the dust thrown up nameless and unknown at the corner of four cross-roads is the grave of one who put himself out of life, and beyond the pale of Christian burial—the grave of a suicide. O brethren, it is a fearful scene ! But I must pursue the analogy. If any of you, after repeated admonitions and warnings, should perish, you have stamped the suicide upon your own soul, and wherever your nameless grave shall be, angels, who delight to minister to those that shall be heirs of salvation, looking at the place where your ashes repose, will have to say, "It is the grave of a suicide, of one who is self-murdered, of one who is spiritually dead, who has struck the dagger of perdition into his own soul." Oh, don't do that, I beseech you ! Don't do that ! Live, live ! In that one word is "the gospel," because Christ has promised life, and the Spirit is waiting to impart it. Live ! May God write that word on your hearts, for the Redeemer's sake !

Christ a Sympathising Friend.

How grateful kindness is when it comes bubbling in all the freshness of sincerity from the unsullied fountain of a friend's heart ! There is not a sorrow that it cannot alleviate, nor a joy that it cannot intensify ; and here we have a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, one who is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, because He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. That is a poor fellow-feeling, you know, which is the result of education rather than experience. You cannot teach a man anywhere to sympathise in the distresses of a fellow-man. If he would know the heat of the furnace, you must put him through the flame. And so Christ has been. His visage was marred more than any man's ; He hungered and thirsted, wept, bled, was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. There is not a pang sharp of agony that lacerates you that did not lacerate Him before you, and He was in all points tempted like as you are, and yet without sin. He is able to sympathise, therefore ; and many a time, as, you know, it is in earthly companionship,

the society and the soothing of a friend delivers the eyes from tears ; the tears flow gently down, and do not scald as they fall, when a friend's sympathising voice is heard : so when Jesus comes to the believer's rescue, his sorrow is but an element of strength and comfort, soothed down into a pensive feeling by the presence of Him who has redeemed and will deliver him.

Afflictions from God.

Trials come not by chance, but are the wise and merciful interpositions of an almighty hand. The Christian is assured of this ; he learns this in the school of Christ, even in the rudimentary part of his education. Knowing that in some way or other his own benefit is involved, he endeavours to find out the hidden lesson which is meant for him. Whether to repress the giant growth of selfishness, whether to impress him with a tenderness for the wants and woes of others, whether to win his spirit from the world and attach him more closely to the skies, whether to exemplify the honourable and noble grace

of resignation—in some way or other he is sure his benefit is involved ; and while poor, unthinking people come, and in ribald wit are scoffing at him, and saying, “Persecute and attack him, for the Lord hath forsaken him, the wrath of God is heavy upon him,” he bends meekly. “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth ; for if we be without chastisement, of which all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons.”

The Strong and the Timid Christian.

To be sustained under the curse we must have the same strength as that by which we were originally brought into the enjoyment of the blessing. We cannot keep ourselves for one moment ; we cannot of ourselves enter upon life ; we cannot sustain ourselves amid the world's ruggedness and temptation and difficulty without the constant protection of a Divine hand. “Thou hast preserved my feet from falling.” It is just this ever-present guidance of God that makes the difference between a strong and

a timid Christian. The timid Christian sends out—to use an illustration that is very familiar—sends out spies into the land of Canaan, hears largely of its fertility and beauty, very ardently desires it as an inheritance for ever ; but then the tall sons of Anak are there, and the cities are walled and very great, and the people are a feeble folk, and the enemy a great multitude ; and under the pressure of these giant-like difficulties the man is content to remain in the wilderness, cropping the scanty herbage by the side of the tangled path, when he might be luxuriating among the grapes of Eshcol and among the vintage of Zion. While the strong man, the man whose faith is strong, who relies on God's promises, he sends out his spies into the land of Canaan too, and they bring back the same report, and say, "It is true ; the tall sons of Anak are there, and they are very tall"—he does not underrate the stature of these sons of the giants one cubit—"the tall sons of Anak are there, and the cities are walled and very great, and it would be a very formidable thing to take." They tell him of the difficulties ; nothing is gained by concealing the truth or by repre-

senting that it is all sunshine and calm, rest and peace, in the way to the kingdom of heaven—nothing is gained by that. The spies are true men, and they tell the story just as it is. Then the man looks into himself and looks upward to his God, and sees the finger which originally called him in the way, beckoning to him from the cloud, and he says to himself, "If the Lord delight in me, He will surely bring me up hence;" and then he turns round and acts with courage, goes into the midst of his groveling companions and says, "Let us go up and possess the good land, for we are well able to overcome it." "One routs a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight;" and, more than conquerors, they enter into the possession of the rest.

Soul Rest.

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul."
Where can the soul rest except in Him who is the Redeemer, Consoler, and Preserver? If He has delivered your soul from death, and your eyes from tears, and your

fect from falling, there can be no rest but in Him. The rest of the soul, you know, was the problem of the old world. They formed ideas upon it which were but as a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then fadeth away. Pleasure, with her ever-changing flashes and hues, was represented as the rest of the soul ; but they lied—they lied—who said it. The soul could not rest in any of these, which are like the restless and ever-heaving ocean, which can never be stilled except by Him that appointed its habitation, and fixed the bounds which it can never pass. God is the only rest of the soul. This return to it implies that you have wandered. Is it so? Has there been an idol in your affection—a compromise in your practice—something that has been unworthy and impure? You have wandered ; then return into your rest, or there is no happiness for you. You see that dove speeding over the waste wilderness of waters, finding no rest for the sole of its foot. How it curves round and round that one lone rock of shelter that floats, a solitary spot upon the world drowned in the tempest of Divine displeasure, until at last the lattice is opened,

the patriarch's hand is extended, and the dove flutters feebly in ! Thou art that dove, if thou art away from Jesus. Oh, who does not say to-day,—

“Take my poor fluttering soul to rest,
And lodge it safely in Thy breast?”

Do you see that pining captive yonder, disconsolate, weeping his tears into the mirror of the river there, in which are reflected the shadow of the terraces and towers of Babylon? that poor harp, unstrung and mute, hanging upon the willows? His heart is sad because his soul is so feeble and sore broken that it cannot sing the Lord's song in a strange land. Thou art that Israelite, if thou art away from Christ. Oh, let the captive exile hasten to be loosed to-night, and come back to his inheritance and to his home. “Return unto thy rest”—this is God's invitation to the Israelite, God's invitation to those who have partially forsaken Him. “Return unto thy rest,”—let each one of you say it to yourselves, let each one of you put it in practice, and by the grace of God may each one of you realise to-night the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace!

Immortality.

There is nothing now anywhere upon which the eye can gaze, or upon which the mind can dwell, that does not remind us of death. Everywhere there are the tokens and memorials of death. The snow upon the head of age, the brightness of the eye of infancy, the tints which light up with such rare and radiant beauty the cheek of youth, all tell us of death. The mountains, the valleys, the streams, the singing-birds, everything in nature tells us of death. I who speak to you am a living memorial of death. You who hear me are living memorials of death. The burden of nature's groaning seems to be one unvarying dirge, telling us that all flesh is as grass, and that the goodness thereof is as a flower of the field. Oh, then, it is difficult to get away from the grasp of these ideas, surrounded as we are by the atmosphere of death. Dying creatures ourselves, we can hardly imagine that time and death will be no more; but it shall come. Immortality! How few of us can spell the word in all its deep significance! Immortality! Once get within those golden

streets, and you have looked your last on age, and weariness, and change, and lassitude, and pain, and death. Once get within those golden streets, and every eye will flash and sparkle with the new vigour of immortal youth ; and it is whispered upon every breath, and it is chanted in every song, and it is heard in every aspiration of the imperishably redeemed, "For ever, for ever, for ever with the Lord!" "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Jesus the Only Saviour.

"Neither is there salvation in any other." To have allowed a plurality of saviours would have been to have indicated a faltering confidence, or an unsatisfied claim. If the covenant has been literally fulfilled ; if the law has been abundantly vindicated ; if mercy and truth shone in blended majesty from the crest of Calvary, all other offering were at once exuberant and insulting. "It is finished!" That was the triumphant death-cry to which Heaven gave joyful re-

sponse, and which neither men nor devils could gainsay or resist ; and therefore the exclusiveness springs from the sufficiency. There *needs* no other Saviour, so there is no other Saviour. None but Christ is needed, and so none but Christ is given. We can imagine the serene satisfaction with which the twelve would assent to this doctrine which Peter propounded in their name. Perhaps they would remember times in their former lives when this great question came upon them, lashing the sluggish current of their ordinary existence into storm ; when inner chords were struck heavily, and thrilled with most sensitive vibration ; when thoughts of most subtle associations were suggested which led to the contemplation of eternity, and they shuddered as they felt themselves its unconscious heirs—how from each investigation they either groped in painfulest uncertainty, or rushed only too eagerly away. But they have found Jesus now, and their souls have got new strength from the companionship ; and they do not blanch from the recollection of their former doubt and trouble. They are like soldiers who have survived the campaign, and who fight the

battles o'er again around the hearthstone, where it is impossible for the enemy's weapons to wound, or for the enemy's forces to rout them. They are like an old wayfarer who can tell again of the trials of the storm, and of the terror of the threatening reef and the roaring breakers, while he is enjoying the blaze and the comfort of the warm eyes and the warm fires that are around him; and their whole souls would rush into their eyes, crying, "Lord, to whom shall we go?"

The Search for Happiness.

God is love, and love is happiness. The Creator, Himself serenely and eternally happy, has intended all His creatures to be happy too. He stamped that intention on the very face of nature. The smile of the dancing sunbeam, the bashful beauty of the flower, all speak of happiness. Every breeze that fans our shore, and every wave that kisses it, are full of a speaking joy, and nothing but God is found in the original arrangements of the universe. It is nothing but sin, nothing but sin, that has brought

such a blight over this beautiful world. But then, unhappily, men are so blinded, that their common judgment of the residence of happiness is almost uniformly erroneous; and that which is not, and which cannot be, the growth of earth, is sought in worldly objects, objects which perish in the using. It may be that I have got satisfaction-seekers here to-night. I would appeal to your own consciousness and candour, if I have. Vanity is inscribed upon every earthly stream, and emptiness upon every earthly object of attachment. How was it in your own cases? You have sought happiness long enough. Some of you have sought it in all varieties of pleasure, and in all varieties of profit. Perhaps you sought it in wealth, and the farm or the money, the stock or the merchandise, was the metropolis of your affections; and the world prospered with you, and your wealth increased—yes, and your care increased, and your desire increased, and your covetousness increased too; and your dispositions seemed to narrow, perhaps, as your wealth increased, and you set your mind upon your gathered store, and in your reflective moods it engrossed you thoroughly,

and your hand involuntarily clutched it as if it were grasping its gold ; and when you came out of this reverie, your head was hot, your lips were parched, and the summer breezes could hardly cool the fever on your brow ;—and what then ? Why, the reaction, the reaction ! The sound of the falling leaf chasing you ; the nameless anxiety with which each change in the stocks, the markets, the funds, or the weather, is watched ; the continual fear of poverty, which seems as if it were appointed by God, like an avenging sprite, to dog and haunt and harass those that will be rich ; and, above all, that sad, provoking, intrusive thought that you have tried so often to stifle, but which murder cannot kill—the thought that though failure or pain may not come and rob the lord of his property, death will come to rob the property of its lord. And you call this happiness ! Or perhaps you sought it in pleasure ; yes, you sought it in pleasure ! you went into the gaming-house—perhaps it was the inner chamber, truly, and, for ought I know, prophetically, designated hell ; and quaffing meanwhile the intoxicating cup, with fearful excitement you watched with kindling eye

and frenzied soul the casting of the die ; and, as the event happened, you were either transported with triumph, or gnashed your teeth in rage. And you call this happiness ! Or perhaps you mingled with the world, wherever it proclaimed its carnival. You have been found in beauty's circle, and, as you have swept down the lighted ball-room, and whirled in the giddy dance, and the music rose with voluptuous swell, you have thought —“ Here, surely, is the dwelling of the gay spirit ; I have found it at last.” But you have looked under the surface, and found it was tinsel, and not gold, you saw. The smiling there was as light upon the grave, and cold hearts were beneath it. You marked the strife of fashion's gay votaries, and their flushed cheek, and curled lip of success, and the bitter, bitter, bitter mortification of failure, and at the close of your day of dissipation, you went home with a wounded heart and fevered brow to a sleepless pillow. And you call this happiness ! And that is all. Let it go forth. It is time it did. Let the poor swindled ones know on what they have trusted. That is all that the world can give in fulfilment of its promise of satisfaction and

of peace ; and, with your broken vows, and blighted hopes, and withered hearts, and desolate houses, "and cheeks all pale, that but a while ago blushed in praise of their own loveliness," you may well exclaim, in the words of the Preacher, "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity !"

Godliness Profitable.

Godliness, the nobler life, the life that is hidden with Christ in God, hath the promise of that which now is, as well as that which is to come. It has been fashionable for its enemies, and for those,—a very great number, and some of them here perhaps,—who have been seeking for excuses to justify them in neglecting its claims ;—it has been fashionable for them to represent it as a gloomy system, withering all the flowers in the path of the traveller, bringing a hue of desolation and mourning upon the rejoicing universe of God. Christianity a gloomy system ! The world and devils may say so ; but a thousand eyes that sparkle with a hope that maketh not ashamed, and a

thousand hearts that beat happily with the full pulse of spiritual life, can tell thee thou liest. Christianity a gloomy system ! Why, it is the Christian only that can thoroughly enjoy the world. To him, to his grateful vision, earth is garlanded with fairer beauty, heaven sparkles with serener smiles ; to him the landscape is the more lovely, because it reminds him of the paradise of his hope in prospect, which his father once lost, but which his Saviour has brought back again, as a family inheritance for ever ; to him the ocean rolls the more grandly, because it figures out the duration of his promised life ; to him the birds in their forest minstrelsy warble the more sweetly, because their woodland music takes him upwards to the harpers harping with their harps in heaven ; to him the mountains tower the more sublimely, because their heaven-pointing summits are the emblems of his own majestic hopes.

“ His are the mountains and the valleys—
His the resplendent groves—his to enjoy,
With a propriety which none can feel
But who, with filial confidence inspired,
Can lift to heaven an unpretentious eye,
And smiling say, My Father made them all.”

Eternal Life.

That there is another world, outlying from the field of sense, with which each of us has a subtle and personal connexion, is a truth to which instinct inclines, which reason yearns to demonstrate, and upon which Scripture has fastened the certainty of a positive revelation. The idea of a future world in the abstract is probably present to every man. It may be fairly questioned whether, on this matter, there ever was an infidel. Some have professed to disbelieve, I know; and in those years of unbridled carnival which preceded the first French Revolution, they wrote upon the walls of Christian temples, "Death is an eternal sleep;" but that was the mad ache of passion, and those that were the wildest in the delirium were the most superstitious in solitude, and turned pale when omens were sinister, and when the avenging conscience woke up upon the blaspheming death-bed. There have been others who have affected scepticism, but in all cases the rebel heart has been the prompter to the inquisitive intellect, and the wish the father

to the thought. I hold it impossible for any to entertain the idea of a future world without being haunted, to say the least of it, by the tremendous possibilities of its truth. A man may exclude it; he may lose sight of it amid the entanglements of sophistry; he may rush to escape from it into some garish hall of pleasure, or into some desperate enterprise where passion murders thought; but let the thought once have a lodgment within—let it present itself broadly and in all its relations before his mind, and the man cannot refuse its acknowledgment; all his instincts will rise up in its favour, and will protest against the scepticism which would belie them. Aspirations after immortality, stifled often but not dead, will become mutinous if they be not allowed expression; and there will be a clashing of faculties in murmuring dissent within him, like the clashing of swords in a council chamber when the decision has been given for war. Brethren, you *know* that there is a future world; it does not require any argument to prove it. No train of reasoning would impress it more conclusively upon your mind. There is a force in that consciousness of

yours which startles you with the remembrance, oftentimes when you would rather forget it, that you must live for ever. You know that life is not a brief beacon-fire which in a moment is kindled, sparkles, and is quenched ; but a sun ruling the day of man's present, suffering a short occultation in the grave, and then rising for eternal shining in the sky of immortality. You know all this ; there is a keen and a restless instinct within you which apprises you of it continually. The monarch of Macedon had his messenger at hand to remind him in the midst of his festivity, "Philip, remember thou art mortal !" That keen and restless instinct which you may not wholly silence performs this office for you, and reminds you—does it not ?—amid the tumult of the life that now is, of that life which is beyond,—so solemn, so still, so changeless, so inscrutable,—which is the inheritance, the belonging of you all. There, in the cradle, is your beginning, but there, in the grave, is not your end. Your life will be hidden in mortality ; but when they search for it, the sepulchre will deny its possession, and the grave will say, "It is not in me," and destruction and

death will say, "We have heard the fame thereof with our ears." You must live for ever!

And then it is equally true, and it is equally impressed, perhaps, upon the universal consciousness, that this future world is a state of conscious, as well as of immortal, existence. The thought of responsibility is co-extensive with the thought of immortality; and that conscious future existence has a retributive connexion with the doings of the present life. Immortal existence—conscious immortal existence—responsible mortal existence—is the heritage of you all. Imagination has darted down into the fathomless obscure, and, basing her visions upon some traditionary remembrances of an original revelation, has peopled the world to come with angelic or misshapen forms, and with all the accessories of beauty or of terror. You cannot get rid of this belief, travel where you will. Go and examine the records of ancient paganisms; go and trace out the aboriginal idolatries of the Western world; go look into the voluptuous imposture of Mohammed, and you find underlying them all the same idea of probation and of recom-

pence. Each of them, of course, looks upon the matter from its own stand-point, and conceives of it as adapted to its own votaries; but the idea of conscious responsible existence is, beyond all question, present with them all. Heaven—a vast hunting-field to the untutored Indian, a Walhalla of heroes to the classical martial pagan, a sensual court of houris to the voluptuous Mussulman—is in all systems regarded as something awarded for fidelity here, a renewal of the pursuits and intercourses of earth, and a perpetuity of interest in the affairs of this mortal coil.

Probation.

The idea of probation and of recompence, present in all the systems of error, is deepened in the gospel into an overwhelming and solemn fact. We are here, the Scriptures assure us, in the midst of a world of uncounted thousands, active, earnest, fluctuating, called to be citizens with our fellows, called to be industrious for the benefit of our families, called to be beneficent after our

measure, called to take our part in the great sweep and roar of human life, called to battle with temptation, called to subdue sin, called to brace ourselves, called to succour others, called to evolve out of ourselves the image of the heavenly ; and yet we are to be judged at last by laws that are not human, but Divine ; we are to be scrutinised by a Being who sees all the events, and influences, and circumstances that have helped to confirm us in the right, or that have helped to warp us to the wrong ; and we are to be tried by the records of a book which lets nothing escape its register, but which sets down in impartial chronicle, not more the crises of our being, than the unnoticed matters which make up the history of every day. Oh, to think of it, brethren ! You and I, since last Sabbath—and it is not long since then—have done something, it may be a great deal, towards shaping our character for eternity. Thoughts casually entertained, words idly spoken, deeds done in the routine of daily life, all have been parts in that preparatory process by whose results we shall abide. Calm and unchequered to the most of us, perhaps, have these two or three days

been ; but we have not done with them—we shall see their results again. Unconscious limners, they have been taking our likenesses for the future ; scribes at work unwittingly, they have written down a register about us in the book of God's remembrance. How solemn, in this aspect of it, is the life that now is !

Temple Worship.

They deprive themselves of a very large inheritance of blessing, and are deeply criminal, "who forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is," in the place where the grand ordinance of preaching is established, where the sacraments are duly administered, and where united and solemn prayer is wont to be made. The ordinances of religion, indeed, may, and, doubtless, very often are, observed only in external decorousness. The song may be a formal praise ; the prayer may be a lip-service only ; the whole may be a Sabbath compromise with conscience for a week's indulgence in sin : but to the true-hearted and to the contrite worshipper, it is from the temple that the healing

waters flow. The heart, ignorant of God and of its own duty, and conscious that the reconciliation for which it pants must be achieved only through the merits of another, hears of that other in the temple, and is glad. The contrite one, loathing himself and his former practices of iniquity, bows cheerfully in the temple, as he says, "The foolish shall not stand in Thy sight: Thou hatest all workers of iniquity. . . But as for me, I will come into Thy house in the multitude of Thy mercy: and in Thy fear will I worship toward Thy holy temple." Here, as in a spiritual laver, the soul of the polluted receives the cleansing of the water and of the Word. Here the poor children of sorrow smile through their tears, as they are satisfied with the goodness of His house; and the lame halts no longer as he emerges from this Bethesda of the paralysed, whose waters have been stirred from on high. It is from between the cherubim that God especially shines; it is among the golden candlesticks that He still walks to bless His people; and here, as in a gorgeous and well-furnished hall of banquet, believers eat of the fatness of His house, and drink of the river of His pleasure;

and in the temple are at once the highest teaching and the most satisfying comfort, the closest fellowship with God and the most effectual preparation for heaven.

Light.

God is the great original of light. There was a time when it was not, when this world was a nameless and unfinished chaos. God said, Let there be light : and there was light. All the forms and modifications of light may be traced up to this act of the great Creator, who made two great lights—the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. From the fount of the sun all the streams of light are flowing. Light is presented to us in ever-varying conditions, but it is always the same ; there is a oneness in its essence after all. It is the same light that glistens on the wings of the fire-fly, and blazes on the ruddy hearth-stone, and sparkles on the jewels of the diadem, and flashes in beauty in the morning. Science tells us that those prolific beds of coal in the bowels of the earth were once forests on its surface, forests of

luxurious vegetation ; that they incorporated the sun's rays, and then in merciful convulsions were embedded in the centre of the lower earth by an all-provident foresight for the wants of an inhabited world. Science tells us, too, that time was when the shapeless crystal was yet new to its covering of earth. Subjected to the wheel of the lapidary, it sparkles out to view as a gem of the purest water. It is but the release of imprisoned rays, which shone from the same great source, long centuries ago ; so that both in the cottage fire-light and in the monarch's gem we have just the resurrection of some olden summer, the great return of some sepulchred sunlight from which man has rolled away the stone.

Now, whether this scientific theory be true or not, certain it is that in our spiritual condition we are in darkness, all of us gross and utter, until the true light shineth on us from on high. We have no native light above us ; we cannot gather any from any of the sources by which we are surrounded. "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

The Rhone and the Arve.

There is an illustration of the gospel, as far as earthly things can illustrate heavenly, that some of you may have seen, in Nature's beauteous kingdom. I stood some years ago near the fair city of Geneva, where two great rivers meet, but do not mingle. Here the Rhone, the arrowy Rhone, rapid and beautiful, pours out its waters of that heavenly blue which it is almost worth a pilgrimage to see, and there the Arve, frantic and muddy, partly from the glaciers from which it is so largely fed, and partly from the clayey soil that it upheaves in its impetuous path, meet and run on side by side for miles, with no barriers save their own innate repulsions, each encroaching now and then into the province of the other, but beaten back instantly into its own domain. Like mighty rival forces of good and evil do they seem, and for long—just as it is in the world around us—for long the issue is doubtful ; but if you look far down the stream, you find the frantic Arve is mastered, and the Rhone has coloured the whole surface of the stream with its own emblematic and beautiful blue.

I thought, as I gazed upon it, that it was a remarkable illustration of the conflict between truth and error ; and in meditating upon this subject, in thinking of the flow of the healing waters, and reading that they should flow into the sea and heal it, the whole thing rose up before me, fresh and vivid as a thing that happened yesterday ; and as my own view of the passage has been cleared, and my own faith strengthened by the recollection, I would fain, by this simple picture, impart the same blessedness to you. Oh ! with a glad heart and free do I believe and preach that there is no ailment, no leprosy, no death, that is beyond the power of the healing of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Is it yours ? Have you been healed ? Are you rejoicing in its love, and life, and blessing, and wealth now ? Oh ! take to yourselves the responsibility as well as the gladness of the thought of the light that is in you—the light of your opportunity and of your privilege. “ If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness ! ”

Trials.

Why do the fierce flames gather and hiss about the bars of gold? Why, but to purge all the dross of it away. Why does the sharp knife pierce into the living heart and shear off the glossy leaves of the fruit-bearing tree? Why, but to prune it into greater plenty and into ampler fruit. My brother, do trials surround thee to-day? Are there difficulties in thy onward path? Art thou looking forward and around and beholding hardly a gleam; a twilight gleam through the darkness? Be comforted; it is God's purpose for thee of *higher usefulness, of richer grace*. Do not rashly part company with these stranger trials, perhaps you may entertain angels unawares. God has never yet employed any one of His servants in extensive usefulness without a previous training. Moses, in the wilderness of Midian; David, in the hold of Engedi; Joseph, in the desert pit and in the Egyptian prison; Daniel, in the den of lions; John, in the exile of Patmos; Paul before Nero, and with Satan's messenger busy with his buffetings within,—look at the whole form of them,—

God's children at school, and sorrow, the grim teacher of that reluctant education which was to fit them for divine work in the world. And then remember, oh, do not forget this part of the comfort, that in the moment of the fiercest trial, it is *trial*, it is *trial*, not destruction. The wrestler does not faint beneath the discipline ; the soldier is not deserted in the field ; the refiner always sits by the furnace ; the pruner never kills the tree. It is not anger, but love, which chastens ; love which directs the process and which brings about the result of blessing ; love which clears the day for the strength or distributes the strength for the day ; love which adjusts the burden to the back, or which strengthens the back for the burden ; love which tempers the wind, love which watches the fire ; love which makes a way of escape out of every temptation ; love which opens doors of hope in Achor's valley ; love which digs wells in the midst of the desolate Baca ; love which sweetens every Mara fountain in the heart's wilderness ; love which bruises Satan under the feet of God's people ; love which revives the spirit of the contrite ones ; love which

offers to the weary a rest and a palm-branch and a crown. *It is love that does it all.* Oh, do not any of you murmur, then, because you are in a bright succession of sufferings, because you tread the thorny road the confessors trod, because you are in the midst of tribulation, and through that tribulation you are endeavouring to enter the kingdom. It is God's high ordinance for usefulness, it is God's blessed baptism unto honour.

Then, secondly, we come to notice this faith triumphing. It is tried, and it is tried in the fire, but it triumphs in the midst of the trial. It was a terrible trial, we have seen, but the faith overcame. There was a fierce struggle for obedience, doubtless it was a very costly sacrifice that was required, but it was freely offered, offered in heart and in purpose upon the altar of the Lord. The crisis came suddenly, but then the Christian is not afraid of a crisis.

"Ye shall reap if ye faint not."

The harvest is certain, and it is nearing. Every pulse approximates it; every day

hastens its approach ; every Sabbath when you meet for worship you get nearer to the sound of the joy-bells which, as for a bridal, are ushering in the eternal Sabbath of the sky. Surely you will not be weary now—now when your salvation is so much nearer than when you first believed. Does the pilgrim halt when he is in sight of the shrine? Though the racer may be panting and breathless, surely he will press on when the goal of his wishes is before him. Courage, my flagging brothers! A few more tossings of the proud waters, and they shall roll their last troubled wave! A few more struggles and temptations, and they shall cease to worry thee for ever! A few more battles, briefly and patiently sustained, and the last enemy shall be destroyed! A few more months and years of weariness and of toil, and there shall be the opening gates of heaven, and the vision of the King in His beauty! Oh! weary not, then, in the discharge of your duty and your voluntary cross-bearing; and in the glory which your faith can glimpse even now you may see the recompence that awaits you. “He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved.”

Think, then, of the happiness of reaping this promise of the inspired Word! How it includes every possibility of satisfaction which your highest ambition can desire! If earthly harvests are seasons of rejoicing—and, when the last sheaf is gathered and the last load housed, the husbandman rejoices in thankfulness and revels in festivities, and counts all the toil of the entire year as a forgotten trouble, because of that one blissful hour—what must the heavenly harvest be? Salvation realised; all the tormenting solitudes of life over; sin banished; not a stain of the accursed thing left; the spirit dowered with a richer portion than the first father lost; no limit to the capability; no end to the enjoyment; mind going out always after God; and at His right hand pleasures that are for evermore.

Praise.

Praise is the only part of duty in which we at present engage which is lasting. We pray, but there shall be a time when prayer shall offer its last Litany; we believe, but there shall be a time when faith shall be lost

in sight ; we hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, but there shall be a time when hope lies down and dies, lost in the splendour of the fruition that God shall reveal : but praise goes singing into heaven, and is ready without a teacher to strike the harp that is waiting for it, to transmit along the echoes of eternity the song of the Lamb. In the party-coloured world in which we live, there are days of various sorts and experiences, making up the aggregate of the Christian's life. There are waiting days, in which, because Providence fences us round, and it seems as if we cannot march, we cannot move, as though we must just wait to see what the Lord is about to do in us and for us ; and there are watching days, when it behoves us never to slumber, but to be always ready for the attacks of our spiritual enemy ; and there are warring days, when, with nodding plume, and with ample armour, we must go forth to do battle for the truth ; and there are weeping days, when it seems as if the fountains of the great deep within us were broken up, and as though, through much tribulation, we had to pass to heaven in tears. But these shall all pass away by

and by—waiting days all be passed, warring days all be passed, watching days all be passed; but

“Our days of praise shall ne’er be pass’d,
While life, and thought, and being last,
And immortality endures.”

Preparation for Heaven.

It is perfectly possible for you to dwell with enkindled imagination upon the happiness of heaven; Fancy may lend her brightest colours in warm and vivid picturings of its realities and joys, while you are not advanced in the very humblest degree of preparation for the real, true heaven of the Bible. Perhaps you have just passed through some sad bereavement, you have stood by some freshly-opened grave, and at the time of your softening, and when sorrow was busy at your heart-strings, you have felt a sort of consolation as you dwelt upon the thought of heaven—heaven, where parted hands should clasp again—heaven, where friends should neither weep nor change in the unintermittent recognitions of Paradise; or, perhaps, it was in the

time of your reverie, and, as you thought painfully upon human frailty, you reposed upon the thought of a material heaven—a heaven that should have all earth's beauty, but unchecked by earth's vicissitudes, and unstained by earth's defilements. Some such picture perhaps flashed before you as that which the daring painter has embodied in his picture of the Plains of Heaven—waters which storm never ruffles, skies which clouds never shadow, trees of perpetual greenness, flowers of unfading bloom, air laden with sweet strains of song from the ever young inhabitants—each a crowned harper unto God, abiding in tranquil security for ever ; and as the voluptuous vision has dazzled you, you have sighed and said, “ Oh that I had wings like a dove ! for then would I flee away and be at rest.” Or perhaps that was not your case ; perhaps what attracted you most was the surpassing benevolence of heaven, the warm, congenial cordiality which obtains there—no looks sinister, no purposes unfriendly ; and as you thought of that atmosphere of love, you longed to be away from earth, the land of crime, and grief, and selfishness, and to dwell in those blest abodes

for ever. These perhaps have been your pictures, your visions in the time of bereavement, or in the time of reverie, or in the time of enkindled benevolence. You have thought about heaven, you have longed—oh ! how longed—to be there ! It is possible, brethren—do you not see it ?—that you may be concerned in any or all of these aspects of heaven which may have been the object of your most vehement desires, and yet there may be within you all the while not one particle of preparation for the real heaven of the Bible. You sought either a paradise of friendship or a paradise of poetry ; but there has been no endeavour to mortify the deeds of the body, and to cultivate those affections which are the very essence of the recompence of reward.

Death Universal.

“There is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.” “All flesh is grass.” No sex is spared, no age exempt. The majestic and courtly road which monarchs pass over, the way that men of letters tread, the path the

warrior traverses, the short and simple annals of the poor, all lead to the same place; all terminate, however varied in their routes, in that one enormous house which is appointed for all living. One short sentence closes the biography of every man, as if in mockery of the unsubstantial pretensions of human pride. "The days of the years of Methuselah were 969 years; and he died." There is the end of it, "And he died." Such is the frailty of this boasted man. "It is appointed unto men"—unto *all* men—"once to die."

This universal mortality proves, as a collateral and subsidiary argument, the scriptural account of the fall of man. It is dissonant to our ideas of a just and holy God to suppose that He, in whose hands are the issues of life and of death, would willingly afflict His creatures, and afflict them without a cause. He cannot be a perfect being who delights in suffering. It is not by chance that the lightning strikes the palace, not by chance that the husband and the father, the earner of the daily bread, is suddenly smitten from the cottage; there is a purpose in it all, and Faith, meekly adoring as she waits by the sepulchre, says, "What we know not now

we shall know hereafter." But when we take the scriptural account of the matter, when we remember that man has sinned, sinned under such aggravating circumstances as are detailed here, we do not wonder at the sweeping sentence of death that has been brought upon the human family. We rather wonder and are astonished at the condescension of God, who has so impressively proved that He loves the sinner, while He hates and would exterminate the sin.

THE END.

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